

INTERNATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

External Fraction of the International Communist Current

SOUTH AFRICA

AGAINST SUBSTITUTIONISM

CLASS STRUGGLE

ANTI-TERRORISM

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INTERNATIONAL CLASS STRUGGLE

THE GATHERING STORM

At first sight, the present world situation doesn't look all that bad for capitalism. The economies of the industrial heartlands still haven't relapsed into a recession, the stock markets are booming, inflation remains relatively low. And furthermore, the number of strikes has diminished during the last half year; major clashes between the classes have become more rare.

But look again. A deeper analysis quickly reveals that staving off the recession up to now has only guaranteed a worse outbreak later on. It shows that, behind the facade of "recovery", unemployment, poverty and homelessness are growing relentlessly in the very heart of the system, while in the underdeveloped countries, the pace of economic deterioration is engulfing the majority of mankind in utter barbarism. It also makes it clear that the international proletariat, far from being defeated still has enormous reserves of combativity. Its trust in the unions and the left, the key-element in capitalism's plan to defeat our class and thereby open the road to war, is eroding.

Capitalism is feeling the knife of its own crisis at its throat. Everywhere it is preparing for the most brutal round of austerity since the onset of the crisis. It knows that it is on a collision-course with the working class and is preparing for this decisive confrontation.

THE COMING AUSTERITY-OFFENSIVE

Massive deficit-spending by the US-government was the main engine of the shallow economic "recovery" of the past years, but now this engine is sputtering and fuming. Under Reagan alone, Washington has already borrowed nearly 1000 billion dollars, only avoiding hyper-inflation by sucking up capital from all over the world, using a tight monetary policy and high interest rates to make dollar-investments attractive. By piling up debts, it has merely put off its problems to the future but this future is rapidly becoming the present. Soon, the US-government will be paying a yearly interest of 150 billion dollars on its debts, more than the gross national product of many countries. It cannot unleash inflation to devalue this debt-load without cutting off the foreign-capital supply upon which US-capital has become dependent or risking a collapse of the entire international monetary system. And it knows that in the increasingly unavoidable recession, the fall in its revenue will accelerate the growth

of its debts even more, rekindle the danger of hyper-inflation and undermine the US'competitive position on the shrinking world market. So US-capitalism had to make a priority of the reduction of its debt-load. It has adopted a legal framework-the Gramm-Rudmanlaw- to eradicate budget-deficits by 1991. Whether this goal will ever be obtained is highly questionable. But it shows there's no doubt about what the central preoccupation of US-capital will be for the next 5 years: a frontal attack on the working class. As the ruling class is united in its goal of continuing the military buildup in preparation for world war, the bulk of the cuts will have to be made in domestic spending which, according to the US-congress'budget office, would have to be reduced by at least 25 % in the coming budget alone. Not only will such cuts represent in themselves a massive attack on the working class'living conditions, but just as the deficit-spending of the past years triggered a 'recovery', the deficit-cutting will accelerate and deepen a recession with massive layoffs and attacks on wages. And if the recovery has been modest, with limited impact outside the US, this will not be the case for the recession. In every country of the world the attack will be brutal and every government will be forced to try to impose an even more draconian austerity-program than those already pushed through in the past years. There is no highly industrial country that we know of that is not planning tens of thousands of lay-offs at this moment.

THE RULING CLASS'PREPARATIONS

What the bourgeoisie is trying to do now is not just to stall for time, demobilising workers today in the hope of quieter times tomorrow: it knows that tomorrow will bring more bitter and massive confrontations and it is actively preparing to meet them from the best possible position.

We can see this in its efforts to make its political apparatus better adapted to derail workers from the struggle for their class interests: by dressing up the state in a "democratic" facade in countries like Haiti and the Philippines and pushing the local bourgeoisie in South Africa to give up its antiquated apartheid-system; in industrial heartlands like France, where the upcoming election will be used to relieve the socialists and their union-allies from governmental responsibility so that they have their hands free to sabotage the self-activity of the workers.

We can see it in the many political propaganda-campaigns that are undertaken, from Moscow to Washington, to whip up nationalism

and thereby undermine class-solidarity, in the efforts of unions to regain credibility, in their refinement of the use of "radical" rank and file unionism to keep alive a trust in union-ideology where confidence in the union-organisation or leadership has died. We can see it in the international campaign around terrorism and the attempts to associate combative workers with the despised terrorists and thereby isolate them (like the French paper "Le Monde" which compared the spontaneous strike in the Paris subway with the taking of innocent hostages). We can see it in the attempts to intimidate the workers, to inflict some highly publicized defeats at all costs, like the miners strike in Britain in 84-85 or the Hormel-strike in the US today, to make workers believe that even the most combative struggle doesn't pay, that fighting back means suicide.

THE WORKERS STRUGGLES

And where does our class stand on the eve of these confrontations? The answer is not that simple and the opinions in the revolutionary milieu are divided. At one end of the spectrum there are those, Bordigists as well as councilists, who don't see any significant movement at all in the class; who refuse to recognize the potential for extension of the struggle while before their eyes strikes are going on simultaneously in several sectors and in several countries around the same issues; who see only the bourgeoisie's strength, its war preparations, and the workers' weaknesses and who equate the refusal of workers to let themselves be mobilized by the unions with mere passivity. At the other end there are those, like the ICC, who depict every stir in the class in the most glowing colors, as if worldrevolution was just around the corner, who see, since 2 years without interruption, "the simultaneity of struggles on a level never before seen, with struggles erupting at the same time in country after country as the working class everywhere fights back" (Internationalism 49), who see "workers selforganisation" in strikes firmly controlled by the unions like in Watsonville California (World Revolution 91) and a development of consciousness that demands that revolutionaries call on workers to participate in unionist or leftist rallies around "workers concerns" (such as unemployment) since any of these -according to the ICC's schematism- could explode into autonomous struggle.

We think that both answers are simplistic and dangerous. While we affirm that since the end of 1983, there has been a renewal of proletarian struggle with a tendency towards the outbreak of spontaneous class-movements in several sectors and countries at the same time, and with a slow but real maturation of consciousness within broad layers of our class, we also recognize that this development is far from a linear progression and it is meeting serious obstacles. The ruling class is not just wat-

ching passively. As we noted, it has launched its own ideological attacks. Its rallies around "workers concerns", far from being neutral in content, are places where it administers its ideological poison. It reacts very rapidly and cunningly to workers' initiatives, to impose its control and prevent any real self-organisation. So far, it has successfully aborted most attempts to extend the struggle over sectorial and national divisions and to prevent a genuine politicisation of the struggles on the working class' terrain. The tenacity of the unions control shouldn't surprise us. Opposing the unions head on is a massive historical task which demands from the working class a deep understanding of how capitalism has evolved and recuperated the traditional workers' weapons. It would be foolish to expect this to happen overnight. So it shouldn't surprise us either that the class struggle is developing at a slow pace, as this development can only make explicit that this struggle implies a formidable task: proletarian revolution, the most monumental social change in human history.

While the wave of struggles that was particularly strong in Western Europe in 1984 continues to find echos all over the world, with massive strikes in countries like India and Brazil and continuing workers unrest in countries like Argentina and South-Africa, while the number of strikes remains relatively high in key-industrial nations like the US, in other heartlands, particularly in Western-Europe, the level of strike activity has clearly diminished, particularly since the second half of 1985. In key-countries like Britain and France, the bourgeoisie is crowing over the fact that 1985 saw the lowest number of strikes in decades.

But does this mean that the working class is demoralised and that the ruling class has succeeded in reestablishing a tight control over the workers? If that were the case, we wouldn't see such frantic attempts by the unions and the left to regain their battered credibility.

In France for instance, the CGT-union has organised over the course of the last months 4 "national days of action" with strikes, rallies and demos. Despite the efforts of leftists and even of revolutionaries like the ICC to mobilise for these union-traps, the vast majority of combative workers refused to enter these deadend streets. The growth of distrust in the left "workerist" apparatus of capital and in the phony struggle it proposes, is one of the most characteristic signs of the maturation that has occurred in the class, even if it doesn't show up in the statistics. It is indicative of the present mood in the class that at the end of December, on the day after the CGT failed in yet another attempt to rally masses of workers in Paris for a "day of action", a spontaneous strike broke out in the Paris subway, spreading like fire to

the entire urban transportsystem. This is a sector where union-control is traditionally very strong, yet the unions did not succeed in attracting the mass of those workers to a phony action nor could they prevent them from launching their own action without asking union-permission.

BREAKING OUT OF THE LEGAL STRAIGHTJACKET

If the number of strikes has diminished recently, it is also characteristic of the present period that many conflicts are very bitter and are fought with a lot of combativity and determination. It is increasingly difficult for the unions to convince workers to "go by the rules", to respect bourgeois democracy with its legalistic straight jacket on the struggle. Court injunctions against mass pickets and secondary picketing are increasingly ignored, despite the risks of heavy fines and jail terms.

One place where this was evident was at the "battle at Fortress Wapping" in Britain. This struggle is an example of a strike that was provoked and carefully prepared for by the bourgeoisie, in order to deliver a stinging defeat to workers, in the hope of intimidating them into submission and thus paving the way for massive layoffs in the printing industry and elsewhere.

The target was carefully chosen. The printers of Fleet street are one of the most unpopular sections of the workforce and therefore one of the least likely to find an echo for solidarity calls in the rest of the class. This is the result of the closed-shop system which is used by the printers' unions to rule in mafia-style over the job market, rewarding loyal followers with high salaries and sometimes fictitious positions. While this does not apply to the vast majority of workers in Fleet street, who are often just as badly paid as one can be in London, the media focus on the abuses has tarnished the image of Fleet street workers.

The preparation for the conflict had been long in the making. A whole new plant was built in an industrial waste land near London, by "News International", publisher of 4 major newspapers. The new technology in the Wapping plant would make it possible for management to sack thousands of workers. While promising that the new plant would not be used to print existing papers, management, with the help of the electricians union EETPU, recruited workers in another city to man the new high tech machines. Soon production for existing papers started in Wapping, under heavy police protection and the company announced that any workers who went on strike against lay offs would be sacked. The bosses were ready. They had secretly worked out a new distribution system, they had surrounded the isolated plant with a moat filled with 3 coils of barbed wire and a high barbed wire fence, defended by scores of security men. Workers were ferried in by buses with protective grills over the curtained windows. Add to this an

army of police, helicopters included, and it becomes clear how difficult it would be to stop production in this "Fortress". The workers knew the odds were against them. They realised that if they struck, they would lose their redundancy money. But the anger was so great that they wanted to fight anyway. It became a struggle marked by violence and combative mass pickets. But without extension of the strike to other plants and other sectors in the class, they were doomed to be defeated. While there were truckdrivers who refused to cross the picketlines and although there was considerable resentment throughout the class about the fact that thousands of workers could be thrown on the street at the whim of the bosses, extension never took place. Union control was still too strong. The workers were fighting for their jobs, for the sake of not lying down and taking it but the unions were defending their own position as suppliers of labour in the industry and were therefore trying to confuse the two interests in the minds of the workers. By portraying the strike as a struggle for the survival of trade-unionism and not one against layoffs (which they have accepted often enough in the past), by portraying themselves as the target of the bosses (while in fact, they are their trusted allies) the unions are trying to regain credibility and are derailing the struggle away from the workers own interests. In this way they alienate many workers, who are disgusted by the unions' manipulations from the real fight that's taking place.

At the time of writing, the strike is still going on but it seems clear that the workers are defeated. But it does not seem that the struggle has become the demoralising blow that the bourgeoisie had hoped for. The more actions were taken against the pickets, the larger the odds became against them, the more sympathy they got from other workers. The picketing became more and more massive and the police were increasingly confronted with a bravery that will not soon be forgotten..

THE RANK&FILE-UNIONIST DANGER

The tendency of struggles of the present wave to seek extension is most visible in strikes that start spontaneously. But always when this is the case, the unions react immediately to "organise" the extension themselves through "the existing union-channels". In practice this means, like in the above mentioned example of the Paris subway-strike, that phony solidarity and stalling negotiations replace massive participation, that respect for the law is imposed to prevent the necessary confrontation with the state. Real extension demands workers-selforganisation, the control over the struggle by mass-assemblies and their elected strike-committees, massive delegations to other factories and workplaces where unrest is growing, breaking with the sectorial divisions which

the unions impose. So naturally, the tendency towards extension leads to a tendency to seek an alternative to the suffocating grip of the unions; as in the strike that took place in day care centers in Sweden at the end of last year, where the unions were kept out of the organisation of the strike and where demonstrations were held under slogans such as "The support of the unions is our death". To combat this tendency capital increasingly uses the weapon of "rank & file-unionism", which rejects the union-leadership and bureaucracy, but not the union-ideology, not the mystification that unions are the workers' organisations, not its tactics of impotent legalism and phony solidarity, not its substitutionism that holds that workers are too dumb to collectively control their struggle and therefore must follow leaders, if necessary more "radical" leaders than the existing ones. Often there is a division of labor between the traditional union-bureaucracy and the "radical" rank & file-unionists, where the former work to intimidate and isolate the workers and the latter work to imprison the struggle in an "alternative" of "radical" impotence. One strike in which this ploy was recently used was the struggle in the meatpacking plant of Hormel in Minnesota (USA).

Over the past months a large number of relatively small strikes took place in the US. Some of these conflicts were very bitter, with violent confrontations with the police; like in the strike at the "Chicago Tribune", where a support rally which drew thousands of workers from other factories resulted, when the demonstrators began to stop the delivery-trucks, in a massive battle with the police. Such events received only scant attention in the bourgeois-press, while the struggle at Hormel drew almost daily headlines and extensive TV-coverage. It could well be that this strike too was chosen by the bourgeoisie to set an example that uncompromising struggle means "mass suicide", to use the words of a unionboss. Again, the case appears to be well-chosen. The particular conditions did not favor extension: the plant is situated in the small, one company town of Austin, in rural Minnesota, far from the big concentrations of workers around the larger cities. From the onset, the workers who lacked any direct struggle-experience, were beset by localism: they were confident that they could win on their own because they were manning the most modern and productive plant of the company. They struck only for their own wages, although workers at the other Hormel-plants had suffered from the same 23 % wage-cut that Hormel had imposed in 1984, and the struggle against wage-cuts is a struggle of all workers.

Sensing that the danger of extension was small, the union bureaucracy gave the strikers the cold shoulder. So the local union-leaders brought in an "expert in radical struggle" to give the "indispensable" leadership: Ray Rogers of the group "Corporate

Campaign" who had earned himself some fame in a aggressive unionizing drive at the JP Stevens textile-company. Rogers introduced all sorts of "innovative" tactics in the struggle: a "public relations campaign against a bank that invested in Hormel, a demonstration at the banks headquarters, far from the plants, committees of workers going door-to-door soliciting contributions, letter-writing to all union locals in the country, a boycott of Hormel-products etc. As one striker put it, "he's kept us busy", assuring that all actions remained non-violent and legal, in short, harmless.

But that became difficult when the company began its attempts to reopen the plant in january, after 5 months of the strike. Workers rallied massively at the plant entrance and blocked traffic at the highway. At last they did what was already a necessity on the first day of the strike : they sent pickets to stop the production in other plants. While many hundreds of workers in Hormel plants in Iowa and Nebraska did come out when the roving pickets asked for their solidarity, this did not lead to a real extension of the struggle, since the strikers of Austin only asked for their support, not for them to join the strike - for their own demands as well as those of the Austin-workers. So when there were no more roving pickets, there were no more solidarity strikes. And neither did the Austin-workers send roving pickets to non-Hormel plants in the area where struggle could break out. Nevertheless, the combativity at the gates was so intense that even the presence of 500 National Guardsmen was not enough to reopen the plant and let in the strikebreakers that the company had hired. When 300 additional Guardsmen were sent in, when the false promise was made that the plant would remain shut, when a Federal negotiator arrived, Rogers and his cronies could convince the workers to reduce the massive pickets and recall the delegations to other plants. While some of the roving pickets refused to come back and many workers distrusted the "promise" and continued to block traffic, the breach was large enough to reopen the plant. The company fired all strikers, including hundreds of workers from the other Hormel-plants who had come out in solidarity.

At the time of writing, the strike officially continues, but without much of a perspective. Production in the struck plant has resumed. The rank & file unionist leaders are derailing the anger of the workers towards pointless shouting-matches with the union bureaucracy, while at the plant itself not much is happening. Rank& file unionism is a relatively new tactic in the US, so it's no surprise that it can still fool workers. The fact that the ruling class has to use this seemingly radical "alternative" is in itself an indication of a maturation of consciousness in the class, which the bourgeoisie is trying to counter. But this maturation must continue by absorbing the lessons

of struggles like those in Hormel. It is not enough to break with the union-top, the roots ~~too-~~ the poisonous union-ideology- must be pulled out.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

These examples allow us to sum up some of the lessons that revolutionaries must emphasize in their interventions in the coming battles:

-Extension is the only future for the struggle, but not union-style extension. What we need is real, living extension, based upon and carried out through self-organisation: mass assemblies, massive pickets, massive delegations to other work places. Solidarity yes, but not in the form of collections of money or food, not just in support for one struggle, but solidarity by joining the struggle and broadening its demands. As in Poland in 1980, when the strike wave spread along the Baltic coast, workers struck not just in "support" for the demands of the strikers in Gdańsk but added their demands as they actively joined the movement.

-Opposition against this or that union or union-leadership is not enough. Workers

must get rid of the union-ideology which keeps them imprisoned in work categories, isolated from workers in other industries, and prevents real self-organisation, which is not only the sole tool for fighting effectively but also the embryo that can grow into a revolutionary alternative to capitalism. To help our class to understand this, revolutionary intervention can not be based simply on slogans against the unions or recipes for autonomous action but must primarily explain how and why unions function as a tool for capitalism, why they cannot do otherwise.

-Revolutionaries have the often thankless task of fighting mystifications, destroying the illusions to which even combative workers still cling. They have to make it clear that the rise of poverty, unemployment and war cannot be halted as long as capitalism continues to exist. This means that, far from being obsessed by the immediate situation, they must show how the present struggle can lead to the unification of the working class, the merger of its demands, its international self-organisation upon which a human society living in freedom and producing for its own needs can be based.

SANDER

SOUTH AFRICA

ANTI-APARTHEID:MYSTIFICATION AGAINST WORKERS STRUGGLE

Unlike the upheavals in Sharpeville in 1960 or in Soweto in 1976, the present unrest - the most widespread and long-lasting in South African history - has not been successfully contained by the apartheid regime. What has changed?

It is surely not the resolve of generations of South Africans to fight back against brutality and misery. Nor is it the use of racism by the ruling class to divide and terrorise the exploited. The difference is that today:

- the world economic crisis has undermined the stability of the regime and this has created a problem for western capitalism which cannot afford to see the area destabilised;
- economic recession has sparked not only general social upheaval but the growth of a specifically working class struggle which cannot be contained by repression alone and can threaten the very basis of capitalist exploitation.

RECESSION AND REVOLT

What has changed is that although a stable world capitalism could maintain a stable 'apartheid' system, today's world economic

crisis has undermined the stability of the present administrators of capital in South Africa.

Recession began in South Africa in 1983. Between September '83 and December '85 the rand fell by 60%. Gold prices declined on the world market; all metal prices slumped. Inflation went from 12% in '84 to 16.8% in '85 and combined with severe drought to force South Africa to declare a moratorium on the repayment of its large foreign debt. The economy is very rigid, shielded by subsidies and heavily dependent on western technology, capital and markets for raw materials. Living standards have been steadily falling for the last three years and are likely to fall even further as the government is forced to increase austerity for the entire population.

It is only against this backdrop of economic instability and recession that the more than 18 months of unrest can be understood. The social turmoil did not begin as a movement against official racism. It was preceded by more than a year of industrial unrest and strikes, and precipitated by rent strikes directed against black town councils. Instead of granting blacks the same meaningless token

of participation in the parliament that was granted to coloureds in '84, the regime decided to concretise its scheme of 'federalism' for black areas by granting 'local autonomy' to black ghetto townships in industrial areas. This 'autonomy' came just in time for these councils to have the task of announcing massive rent increases, supposedly given a better chance of acceptance because they were black-imposed. Vastly out of touch, this newfound black 'leadership' was overwhelmed by rent strikes and riots beginning in Sharpeville and spreading all over the country. The army literally invaded the townships when the massive police force could no longer maintain order. Massive repression only spread the movement even further, leading to strikes in the major towns and in the mining industry.

The unrest has not been controlled by the present rulers of South Africa. Despite the more than 1100 dead and thousands wounded; despite the nearly 8000 arrests since the State of Emergency was declared, added to the more than 1500 behind bars from last year's round-ups, and the beatings and torture in prison; far from stemming the tide of social revolt, repression in South Africa has merely fanned the flames of a movement whose backdrop of austerity, lay-offs and poverty cannot be denied.

What the present rulers lack is any ideological hold on the majority of the population to ensure order and, in the present situation, orderly economic sacrifices. Ideology is never a question of words alone but of social institutions aimed at integrating (or, at least, neutralising) the discontent of the exploited into the concerns of the 'national interest' and the state. This is precisely what the Afrikaner regime doesn't have: there is no black bourgeoisie which can appeal for order, no recognised political opposition; there is no solid tradition of union 'discipline' either among the employers or the workers; there is no unifying ideological theme that could serve the Afrikaner regime. The present desperate search for 'valid intermediaries' with whom to negotiate has led to the overtures towards releasing Mandela, the only widely known black political leader and the government's gratuitous comments that "apartheid is outdated". The paradox is that even the token 'reforms' proposed by the present rulers have created holes in the system that risk unravelling the social fabric faster than control can be maintained.

Moreover, the white minority is severely divided by accelerating events. The ruling National Party is caught between policies of reform and the all-out repression favoured by the right wing. Big business, on the other hand, the economic interests in gold and diamonds, playing the role of 'enlightened capitalist humanitarians' seem willing to sacrifice white political power if necessary to maintain economic control. They, like international capital in general, can afford to accommodate themselves to whatever new regime offers stability of profits and the

prospect of effective control over the working class.

About the only thing the Afrikaner regime firmly controls is the army and an impressive panoply of repression. If the situation continues to deteriorate, and concessions seem unlikely to create a national consensus, their only recourse will be an all-out massacre threatening to close down the economy in chaos. This is precisely what the IMF, Washington, the European capitals and the major mining companies wish to avoid: a situation where change comes too late to avoid major social breakdown. And they do not care which elements of the local bourgeoisie must suffer in the long run to preserve capitalism. In this sense, the days of the Afrikaner regime are numbered.

IS THERE A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

Change will surely come to end apartheid although the time scale depends on many contingent factors. The question is: what will take its place?

The media, and especially the capitalist left, promise us liberalisation in South Africa, and eventual transition to one-man-one-vote and the 'hope' of parliamentary democracy. It is this 'hope' that the ANC/UDF has used to canalise a popular movement that began as economic revolt against austerity into a movement for 'democracy'. It is this mirage, that black rule will bring 'democracy' and 'justice' to South Africa, that has been used in the campaigns to convince workers in Europe and America that capitalism can 'cleanse itself' of apartheid, that race is more important than economic reality or class, that we ought to be grateful for our privilege of facing austerity and privation with 'democracy' and supposed equality.

Many revolutionary groups are content to point out that "even if a parliamentary system is set up, like in Europe, it will still be capitalism in South Africa". This is at best a half-truth and a dangerous one because it sows illusions about the nature of our period in general and about the future for underdeveloped countries in particular.

In our time, there is no historical possibility of creating or even maintaining the bourgeois democracy characteristic of the 19th century. All over the world, the permanent crisis of the system has led to the end of bourgeois parliamentarism in favour of state capitalism.

The democratic facade we see in Western Europe and the US is only the empty vestiges of bourgeois democracy - only the remains of what was built up in the past century when capitalism could offer a measure of improvements and durable reforms for the exploited during its period of prosperity. But those days of historical growth and prosperity are long gone for capitalism as a whole. The mere facade may still stand in the West but as

ideological trappings to hide the reality of the bankruptcy of the system.

On the periphery of the system, however, there is no basis for this facade. There are no grounds for creating out of whole cloth a nationalism strong enough to draw the disparate peoples of arbitrarily-created South Africa together without the need for constant repression. Once 'anti-apartheid' has been exhausted, there is nothing to offer but a further slide into economic crisis and the most blatant impoverishment. There is no coherence that can be the basis for even the short periods of democratic facade we see in Brazil or Argentina.

Only an iron hand can rule South Africa for capitalism. Even the ANC and others see the difficulty of presenting simply 'anti-apartheid' to a movement whose roots lie in resistance to economic conditions. They have been emphasising promises of a 'redistribution of wealth' and 'socialism' - the same nationalist 'socialism' that has presided over bloodbaths in so much of Africa. Some factions of the ANC make no bones about foreseeing the need for a one-party state.

Once the floodgates are opened, the time of the pluralistic parliamentarians will be short-lived. Tribal violence and terror for the masses was not what Mugabe promised when he presented himself as a democrat and a nationalist. But it is, along with the outlawing of strikes and the crushing of the working class, the reality of the quasi-totality of Africa today.

Tribalism, although undermined by capitalism's need to create generations of workers in the urban areas, has been kept alive to serve the social control measures of the Afrikaner ruling class. Decadent capitalism is unable to weld the country into a unity - it has specifically favoured all regressive tendencies from tribal identification in passbooks, apportionment of jobs in certain areas to specific tribes to encouraging a para-military organisation among the largest tribe, the Zulus. These regressive tendencies, encouraged by white rule, will not disappear. On the contrary, with more hardship and misery in store, these tendencies will come to the fore as in January when violence broke out in Durban among Zulus and Pondo's trying to compete for jobs in this 'protected' Zulu area.

Capitalism in its decadent phase in the 20th century can no longer accomplish its historical task of proletarianising these masses whose pre-capitalist base has been wiped out. With only austerity and sacrifice as a perspective, democratisation and liberalisation cannot be improvised out of the ruins of apartheid. When apartheid falls in today's world, it will be to give the reins sooner or later to the same kind of repressive regimes that rule in the rest of Africa. This will in no way mean that South Africa will leave the US bloc. On the contrary, the western bloc will have no problems about supporting any

black regime that can have a hope of assuring order and stability while maintaining the Western bloc's hold on this vital area.

Capitalism has nothing to offer in South Africa but a further slide into barbarism and regression that can only end with the end of capitalism itself. Holding out hopes of liberalisation to the working class in South Africa is just using an illusion to divert class struggle and preparing victims for tomorrow's slaughter.

BULWARK AGAINST REGRESSION: A STRONG WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

South Africa has the largest working class in all of Africa. This, more than any phoney 'promises' about parliamentary democracy, is the only effective counter-weight to regression and barbarism. Despite the particularities of the social context there, the workers are facing the same recession as workers all over the world and are fighting back with the same class weapons.

Working conditions have been deteriorating rapidly over the past three years. In Port Elizabeth, for example, car factories have been down to 20 hours a week. Both black and white workers have struck against declining wages: the minimum wage of 2.5R an hour was worth 80c in '84 and only .39c in '85. White and black unemployment has been rising and now, Ford is pulling out. Chronic unemployment in the 'homelands', always high in these barren dumping grounds, has reached more than 50% and now these kinds of figures are spreading to industrial centres, threatening especially the young people who are the spearhead of the township riots.

The workers began to fight back in '83 with increasing industrial unrest which spread to the gold fields in '84 and left its mark on the rebellions. Last year, hundreds of miners were on strike and although the July-August strike was broken, unrest continues in the mines including many 'unauthorised' strikes such as the one in a gold-mine near Johannesburg in February called to protest against mass firings, or in the west Transvaal where nine miners were killed after three waves of mass dismissals in the last eight months.

Miners earn a miserable pittance in conditions so bad that recruitment for the mines no longer comes from black urban areas. Miners are mainly contract workers seeing their families once a year like the Pakistani and Middle Eastern workers in the Persian Gulf off-shore oil-fields. When mass repression (including deadly confrontations as well as passbooks recording previous employers so that many companies have been able to refuse to rehire dismissed workers under any conditions) can no longer control workers in such conditions, the situation for capitalism is clearly grave.

The less cretinous and more prosperous mining companies rapidly granted wage increases to the miners but even the 15% increases in '85

were merely crumbs which were hardly likely to continue in the recession. Clearly the creation and spread of unions to contain the workforce in the mines was an absolute necessity. The urgency and effort being put into building active unions in the country is a sign of the danger the working class movement poses for capital. Although the ANC and other political parties admitted to being 'surprised' by the fury of the spontaneous revolts in the townships and to "finding themselves a step behind the rebellion", the class struggle could not be allowed to follow its own dynamic on the shop floor.

In the '85 miners' strike, the National Union of Minerworkers sabotaged the impetus for a massive strike in all mines by agreeing to a separate settlement with Anglo-American and by delaying the announced strike deadline from July to 25th August, until it became a token, defeated effort.

In December '85, a new super-federation of multi-racial unions was set up to break up community-based and 'general' unions and to separate workers into more controllable unions by industrial category. But the new federation, COSATU, includes a large proportion of more experienced black workers in the engineering and auto industries who cannot be dealt with by mass firings. It is to these workers and others that COSATU has had to 'promise'(!) that if the ANC comes to power, they will resist efforts by politicians to imitate their counterparts in Zimbabwe and Angola who took over these countries' unions and forbade strikes and working class activity in the name of the national interest - showing that the example of 30 years of decolonisation has not been lost on these workers.

Even more fervently than 'enlightened' segments of the local bourgeoisie like Anglo-American, Washington has been pushing for the formation of unions, pressuring the government in 1984-85 to release union leaders from prison as a priority and building the image of men whom workers can identify with as 'their' union leaders.

Capitalism is not threatened by unions in South Africa any more than anywhere else in the world. Just as in the West, unions are there to control and sabotage the working class from within and divert rebellion into burning itself out rather than attacking the system at its roots. The only real threat is working class combativity and consciousness. Workers in South Africa are not alone. Workers in the West face the same enemy, the same threat of decaying capitalism. They too must break through the hypocrisy of the 'sanctions' threat by their governments and the demagogic campaigns of the left and leftists who are past masters at manipulating emotional fraud so as to have workers identify with race over class, obey 'their' unions, and believe in a 'better life' possible under 'liberalised' or 'democratic' capitalism today. How weak can seem the idea of proletarian internationalism when the

No working class in any country can succeed alone in toppling capitalism and surely not isolated in South Africa. The only hope for workers in South Africa is not to fall prey to 'anti-apartheid' promises, to be able to see that the reality behind the misery and massacres is capitalism, the bourgeoisie of every race and colour defending its privileges. To be able to see that they can put no faith in the false hopes of reforming or liberalising capitalism in decadence. struggles of workers in Europe and America have not yet thrown aside their chains and confronted the system as a whole as they have in the past. But it is the experience of these struggles against the most developed forms of capitalist control in the West that is the real solidarity that the working class needs all over the world.

In South Africa, without class struggle to break the hold that black nationalism seeks to create, the only result will be an ever-greater anti-working class bloodbath. Supporting any illusions about an 'anti-apartheid democracy' in South Africa is complicity in the US bloc's campaign to 'stabilise' South Africa for capital and a preparation of the ideological chains for the victims of tomorrow.

Judith Allen

HAITI, PHILIPPINES

DIFFERENT FACE, SAME MISERY

Remove the "democratic" hooplah surrounding the recent, dramatic changes in government in Haiti and the Philippines and the most apt comparison is with the coup d'etat that removed Allende in Chile in 1973 and replaced him with Pinochet. In Haiti and the Philippines, as in Chile, it was American imperialism which decided on the timing of the coup, gave the "green light" to the military, in short, orchestrated the planning and execution of the events:

While the governmental changes in Haiti and the Philippines have "made in the USA" written all over them, they are nonetheless only comprehensible as a response to a rapid deterioration of capitalist economic and political stability throughout the "Third World". The global crisis of overproduction is shattering the fragile basis of capitalist order throughout the underdeveloped countries. As the shanty towns with their surplus population -- which capital cannot profitably exploit in the face of a saturated world market -- swell, the political regimes and ideologies on which capital-

ism depends to maintain a semblance of order reveal their bankruptcy. The result is growing proletarian struggle in the industrialized pockets of the Third World and massive -- although frequently futile -- social upheavals in the urban slums where a dispossessed peasantry is turned into a pauperized mass. The bitter strikes now taking place in the South African goldfields are the latest manifestation of the real perspective for proletarian struggle in the Third World. The revolt of the impoverished conscripts who make up the Egyptian security police (who vented their rage on the luxury hotels which blossom in the midst of the abject poverty of the country) are but the latest example of the desperate social revolts which will increasingly explode in the underdeveloped countries. Moreover, unlike Iran at the end of the 1970's, which was struck by both types of struggles, the situation today is not limited to a handful of countries but as the world crisis deepens, has become a veritable epidemic which is of growing concern to American imperialism which controls the bulk of the Third World.

There can be no doubt that the events in Haiti and the Philippines demonstrate that American imperialism has drawn the lessons of the debacle that overcame it

in Iran with the fall of the Shah, when the U.S. waited too long to replace a tottering regime.

In the face of violent social upheavals in Haiti, Washington moved quickly to remove Jean Claude Duvalier who had lost any possibility of providing order and stability on a Caribbean island which shares a vital sea lane with Cuba. The establishment of a military junta to rule in Port au Prince in place of the hated dictator, which Washington orchestrated, simply means that the officers who once wore the blue uniforms of the brutal Tonton Macoutes have exchanged them for "democratic" khaki.

In the Philippines, where the Marcos regime had demonstrated its incapacity to bring an end to the civil wars prosecuted by the Muslim separatists of the Moro Liberation Front and the stalinist NPA, where the dictator's nepotism and corruption had completely alienated most leaders of the bourgeoisie and the technocrats, the social revolt building up in the slums of Manila threatened to make the country ungovernable and thereby jeopardize the interests of American imperialism which requires a modicum of order and stability in the Philippines because of its strategically vital air and naval bases there.

THE USA REINFORCES WAR IDEOLOGY

The massive display of US military power in the Gulf of Sidra in March must be seen as an integral part of the generalised offensive of American imperialism that has been going on since the beginning of the 80's.

However, the destruction of Libyan naval vessels and missile sites by the US 6th fleet was not an opening shot in an effort to topple Khadafi or to put an end to terrorist activities linked to Tripoli. Indeed, the most immediate result of the 'confrontation' between the US and Libya is an increase of support for Khadafi, both within his own country and in the Arab world in general. Moreover, despite the bellicose rhetoric of the Reagan-administration, it is clear that Washington does not see the Libyan regime as part of the Russian bloc, extending the military reach of Moscow deep into the Mediterranean area. In this sense, we can only describe the war of words between Washington and Tripoli as a phony crisis.

If the events in the Gulf of Sidra were not a direct confrontation between the Russian and American imperialist blocs, they nonetheless are an important moment in the strengthening of American imperialism. The main purpose behind the well orchestrated 'battle' in the Gulf of Sidra as well as the hoopla around the Sandinista 'invasion' of Honduras, was to give a renewed impulse to the mobilisation of

popular support for US-military intervention overseas. The quasi-unanimous support for Reagan by both political parties in the US, the well-oiled media-blitz, represent one more step in the ideological campaign to prepare the American population for military adventures throughout the globe. In this sense, the events are a blow directed to the working class inasmuch as their aim is to make the workers accept nationalist solidarity instead of class solidarity, and to make them identify their interests with those of their class enemy. The timing of these events coincides with the campaign to further increase the US' military budget in a period dominated by mounting austerity. Of less importance was the opportunity for American imperialism to test its technology, cruise missiles in particular, under quasi-war conditions, with a view to real confrontations with the opposing bloc.

Finally, the destruction of the missile-site in Sirte, probably manned by Russian personnel, without any military response by Russia, even defensive, could not fail to send a message to other nations in the region such as Syria, that Russia might not back up the armaments it sells to 'clients' in the Middle East with effective military power in case of a conflict.

--MacIntosh

Washington's conviction that only a dose of "democracy" could stabilize the situation led it to invest Cory Aquino with the trappings of power. As in Haiti, so in the Philippines, it is the military that has real power locally and which acted under the watchful eye of the US to remove a discredited and now ineffective leader. Marcos' own Defense Minister, Enrile, and deputy armed forces chief of staff, Ramos, led the military revolt and are now the lynchpins of the new regime.

While the events in Haiti and the Philippines clearly demonstrate the strength of American imperialism in the face of the deteriorating economic and political situation in the Third World, this must not obscure the fact that governmental changes, however smooth and efficient, cannot achieve the desired stability. In the face of the mass starvation and economic collapse to which the world crisis of capitalism condemns the Third World, no political regime or ideology can today impose any durable order. As the traditional "democratic", populist, nationalist and "socialist" ideologies wear thin, capitalism in many Third World countries seeks to shore itself up with new versions of fun-

damentalist religion (eg Shia Islam in Iran; Buddhism in Sri Lanka) or tribalism (eg the Baghanda in Uganda; the Shona in Zimbabwe). Yet given the total economic chaos and collapse, it is unlikely that even these particularly atavistic ideologies which capitalism can draw on from the museum of antiquities can accomplish the desired goals -- though the barbarism for which they provide a cloak is all too real. In Haiti, the "democratic" military junta already faces new signs of social unrest. In the Philippines, where the security of American bases absolutely requires stability, the "democratic" facade provided by Aquino, backed up by the army, is probably Washington's best card. But the inability to prevent new economic catastrophes means that the stability achieved will probably be short-lived.

Whether the turmoil and disorder which is now the daily lot of the underdeveloped countries result in a new orgy of barbarism or break out of that infernal cycle depends on their capacity to link up with the growing struggles of the proletariat in the heartlands of world capitalism. That is the spectre which haunts the masters of world capital today.

Mac Intosh

THE MILITARY PREPARATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN BLOC

Forty years after the end of the Second World War and the constitution of the two imperialist blocs, their manoeuvres, their economic and military development, their bloody conflicts across the globe, have brought their rivalry to this point: Russia is now surrounded by a hostile, economically and militarily more powerful, Western bloc which has gone on the global offensive and is hell-bent on pushing Russia's influence back behind its own frontiers.

Where does Russia go now?

To find the germs of an answer to this question it is worthwhile briefly to review the whole sweep of their global rivalry over the past four decades to get a clear picture of its actual evolution. The options open to Russia, the meaning of the various economic, military and ideological campaigns underway today will then become more apparent.

THE POST-WWII RIVALRY

In the period since the end of the War, the evolution of their rivalry has been neither strictly one-sided nor linear.

In the first two of these four decades, tre-

mendous changes took place in the relationship between the two major imperialisms as they each tried to consolidate their gains, particularly those made at the expense of Germany and Japan. Well before the end of the War, the US had identified Russia as its future major enemy on the world stage.

So much was the containment of Russia a factor in US strategy that even the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was primarily to demonstrate to Russia the even more massive military power the US could unleash than anything used up to that time. This demonstration served to check Russia from becoming too adventurist regarding Europe and, especially, Japan where the US not only kept Russia out of any involvement in the occupation but was also able to rebuild that shattered economy to become today the second most powerful in the world.

While Russia was well aware that its inferior economic and military power limited what it could do, it did not stop challenging the US - as was seen, for example, over Berlin in 1949 and in Korea in 1952. During the 1950s, however, the effects of the post-war reconstruction and the reconstruction of the fin-

ancing of the world economy tended to attenuate (though of course it could not permanently overcome) the antagonisms between the two blocs.

The US strategic nuclear forces were built up and consolidated to such a degree that the US could sanctify its unquestioned superiority into the policy known as Massive Retaliation (read assured Russian destruction). Under this umbrella, the inter-imperialist rivalries settled into, first, the Cold War and then into 'Peaceful co-existence' particularly after the Cuban missile crisis. 'Peaceful co-existence' simply meant continuing their duelling with the US usually by proxy and generally in areas geographically far from the main capitalist metropoles. 'Peaceful co-existence' was an ideology which went along with the apparent overcoming of capitalism's tendency to crisis and the 'boom' of the late '50s and '60s.

During these years, Russia spread its influence across the world. Among the national liberation movements which sprang up to challenge the old colonial authorities whose power had considerably diminished during and after the Second World War, Russia supported those which were against the US bloc. Russia's power could be felt to a greater or lesser extent in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, East and South East Asia, and in the Caribbean and South America. While its limits were clear, within them Russia had nonetheless become a global imperialist power.

This period shows up a characteristic which should be borne in mind today. That even when in a decidedly weaker position in a global sense, Russia was willing to search out all possible means to undermine its adversary's economic and military advantage (and even whittled down the US' nuclear superiority). The fact that today Russia is relatively in an even weaker position only changes the effectiveness of its challenge to the US, not the need the Russian state capital has to do it.

THE CRISIS RE-OPENS

The major turning point came with the opening up of the world economic crisis in the latter half of the sixties. This crisis not only hit all the economies of the world, it also sharpened the inter-imperialist antagonisms between the blocs - as well as waking the revolutionary proletariat to its historical tasks. The interplay of these forces has often given the superficial appearance of being of impenetrable complexity and baffling contradictions and inconsistencies. Only a marxist analysis can unravel the various forces underlying the situation, and to see where they are leading.

For some years Russia tried to open up to the West on the economic level in the search for capital (of which it was desperately short) so as to develop and, the Russian bourgeoisie

hoped, overcome its economic problems. Both sides were searching for mutual advantage at the economic level, since the Western countries were hoping to open up new markets in Russia as a means of dealing with their growing problems of overproduction.

However, their antagonisms were at the same time becoming ever sharper: in the Middle East, the Far East and in Africa. And in the 1970s, everywhere it seemed as if Russia was on the advance. In the volatile Middle East, Russia was using factions of the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Iraqis to maintain a hold in the region. In South East Asia the wars had been continuing for years; when the US planned to pull out of South Vietnam, the continuing Russian support for the North aimed to make the American departure as ungracious as possible and their exit from Saigon proved it. In Southern Africa, Russia took every advantage from the fall of the Lisbon government and put a large Cuban force into Angola to maintain a hold in the area. It also tried to gain from the coming to power of Frelimo in Mozambique and in the increasing turbulence developing in Rhodesia.

But, whatever the appearances, Russia was in fact going more and more on the defensive, as a few key examples show.

All Russian influence had been pushed out of South America in the late '60s. In the early '70s the US pulled Egypt right out of the Russian orbit, painting a whole new picture in the volatile Middle East; while leaving South Vietnam to the North and to Russia it began to show clear results from its efforts to pull China (a far more valuable prize) into its bloc; in the late '70s in Southern Africa the liberation organisations in Rhodesia, previously pro-Russian, became overtly American pawns. The 'hesitation' of the US bourgeoisie in the mid-'70s to commit large resources to keep the Cuban forces out of Angola (as Ford and Kissinger argued for) was in fact part of a reassessment of US military policy. Wary of the enormous (and not necessarily effective) cost of Vietnam-type commitments, the US was becoming much more selective in its application of military force, its choice of local faction to support, and the balance of economic and military weight to apply in any set of circumstances. Through the late '70s, the US consolidated its position in the Middle East with the Camp David Accords; and went on to shake further Russia's influence in Syria and Iraq.

The last major advance by the Russian bloc came right at the end of the '70s: the invasion of Afghanistan. Taking advantage of the regional weakening of the US bloc, the result of the Shah's fall in the wake of tremendous social unrest, Russia broke the Yalta agreement after more than 35 years.

Ironically, the spectacular 'gains' of Russia in southern Africa in the mid-seventies and in Afghanistan at the end of the decade meant little on the global level against the steady advances of the US.

THE RUSSIAN RIPOSTE - POST-AFGHANISTAN

The invasion of Afghanistan did not, as Western propaganda made out, mark the beginning of a new global offensive from the Russian bloc but was only a reply to the advances of the West from a position of greater and greater weakness and which was only possible because of a local dislocation of the US bloc. Once again, in a more pointed way we can see the Russian bourgeoisie's will to act against the US, whatever longer-term difficulties it would create.

Certainly by the beginning of the '80s, when Brezhnev was clearly suffering from deteriorating health, the fighting inside the higher echelons of the state bureaucracy over the succession would have already begun. The three General-Secretaries elected since his death in November 1982 personify the battles out of which the present ruling faction has emerged to have its programme prevail.

It is of course difficult to decode the detailed behaviour of the Russian bourgeoisie with any great precision. Nonetheless, it seems clear that in the interregnum between Brezhnev and Gorbachev, Andropov and Chernenko showed the vacillations within the ruling class and highlighted the contradictions it finds itself in. This can be put broadly as follows.

Andropov recognised the notorious inefficiency of the Russian economy (in the backwardness of much of its means of production, the organisation of the national economy and the low productivity of the workers) as the fundamental problem to be dealt with as the basis for resolving all others. Hence his emphasis on discipline (for the working class), the struggle against corruption and the push for economic reform. This was the harbinger of the future. Chernenko, on the other hand, was the last major representative of the policies of the '70s. His brief sojourn in power showed two characteristics - a seeming greater concern about the threat of social unrest in Russia, even at the expense of the needs of the military.

The accession of Gorbachev shows the strengthening of the faction which wants to follow the path laid out by Andropov. This faction, however, aims to go much further. Gorbachev has an over-riding aim, a focus for all the specific policies he is pursuing and that is to prepare Russia for war.

GORBACHEV'S WAR PREPARATIONS

The 'internal' preparations cover the same basic ground as in the West: a strengthening of the war economy, a reinforcement of the bloc, and a further ideological attack on the population.

This preparation will require a far more efficiently-run economy as the basis for the increased levels of production necessary for

the military, in an attempt to narrow the ever-widening gap with the West. Improvements will be sought both quantitatively and qualitatively, to compete better against the West's war machine. An increase in efficiency will require more than the current drive to purge the 'corrupt' and conservative layers of the bureaucracy. It will alter the many mechanisms used to manage the economy; for example, in Gorbachev's words, there is the need for "serious scientific recommendations on the application in contemporary conditions of such economic levers as price, cost, profit, credit and certain others." (December, 1984) He aims to devolve considerably more responsibility to the managerial ranks and to demand more effective performance. For the workers, this means even greater exploitation than before; for many of them much higher proportions of their wages will be tied to productivity. In addition, Gorbachev has in the past shown his approval for layoffs to improve productivity; in other words, Russian workers can expect more overt unemployment too.

This approach to economic policy marries with another aspect of Gorbachev's ideological campaign in which he claims there will be an increase in production of consumer goods - in fact, given the requirements of military production there won't be the ability to expand on the consumer front. Instead, there will be a clearer allocation of those produced to those who earn through increased productivity - what in the West would be simply an incentive scheme. Gorbachev's close attention to this sort of issue was underlined in December 1984 when he justified the improvement of 'distribution relations' on the grounds that "this is a most sensitive sphere that exercises an active influence not only on production but also on the consciousness and the mood of the people". None of this, however, will lead to any relaxation in the state's vigil against the working class of whom since the defeat of the Revolution the bourgeoisie has lived in fear. On the contrary, for this faction of the Russian bourgeoisie, discipline is even more the order of the day, particularly at a time when there will be an even greater imposition of exploitation and austerity.

The preparation of Russia for war means the preparation of the whole Eastern bloc, requiring a reinforcement and an efficiency drive throughout the entire military-economic structure. However, here again Russia runs into acute problems. By squeezing its satellites on an economic level even more than in the 1970s (for example, over oil prices) Russia is consequently increasing the need for the East Europeans each to seek closer links, trade credits and technology from the West - which it then has to discourage because these links tend to undermine its economic and political grip on its satellites. Already Gorbachev has taken a strong stand against any individual overtures to the West.

However difficult it will be to strengthen

Russia's war economy it will be even more difficult in Eastern Europe. Here Russia is constantly faced with self-defeating options: it needs to milk their economies, yet this reduces their military/economic strength and moreover helps stimulate the very social unrest which it rightly fears - it certainly wants to avoid more Polands. It is imperative for Russia to maintain the cohesiveness of its bloc, yet anything it does seems to put it under greater stress.

On the ideological front, there have been considerable changes since the beginning of the decade. There has been a radical change in the treatment of the issue of world war in the Russian media which has for the first time since World War II really pushed the threat of nuclear war as a major issue for the population, taking a leaf out of the Western bourgeoisie's handbooks.

HOW WILL RUSSIA ACT?

Given the evolution of the present situation and the balance of forces between the two blocs, the main axes of the Russian bourgeoisie's strategy to confront the US bloc are likely to be threefold:

1. To find areas of leverage to get concessions from the US concerning its strategic nuclear arms build-up which, in order to compete (so as to stop the US regaining a first-strike capability), puts an enormous stress on the Russian economy.

Gorbachev has already been vociferous in his dealings with the US over this issue, launching a novel propaganda campaign in the process. The amount of success he has depends to a large extent on his success in other areas, i.e. on what he has to offer elsewhere.

2. To reduce as much as possible the pressure of the US bloc on its perimeter.

Russia faces an enormous threat in the Far East where in the last two or three years the US has reinforced its bloc probably more than it had done over the previous 40 years. Massive arms sales are being made to China to modernise its entire army; Japanese military expenditures are increasing; closer relations are being built up between all the countries around the Pacific basin, particularly along the Asian littoral - such as between Japan and Korea, and between China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Russia is trying to open up some rapprochements with several countries in the area, particularly China and Japan, to slow this process down. This activity is not restricted to negotiations, but has a military dimension too. Through Vietnam - a full COMECON member which has the fourth largest army in the world and certainly one of the most battle-hardened - it has a strong military force in the region, prepared not only to invade Kampuchea but to strike into Thailand, to hit the

Chinese- and US-backed Pol Pot forces. Tension has also been kept up on the Vietnam/China border over the past years; it must be one of the US' goals to get Vietnam out of the Russian bloc and we can expect to see a strong Russian/Vietnamese response to any attempts to increase pressure on Vietnam.

While the West has been doing its utmost to turn the invasion of Afghanistan into a running sore for the Russian army through military and economic aid for the Mujahadeen based in Pakistan, the Russian forces have been striking back at bases in Pakistan. Russian-backed Afghans are using terrorist bombings in the refugee camps as reprisal for guerrilla action in Afghanistan; and are using the same methods to worsen relations between the local population, and the Afghan refugees and the Pathans; on top of which, there is the threat of swelling the refugee population, already the largest single exodus in the world, even more - so putting a greater stress on Pakistan.

3. To make the US pay the highest possible price for the maintenance of its global empire, especially where its military presence is important.

For this goal, Russia will undoubtedly take advantage of the massive social unrest sweeping the underdeveloped world after years of worsening economic crisis. Two examples will illustrate the point. The US military base at Clark Field in the Philippines is the largest outside the American mainland, its size reflecting its importance for protecting Western sea-lanes and interests in the region. Yet this lies in a country one-third of which is controlled by a Russian-backed guerrilla army and the other by a member of the bourgeoisie who couldn't stay in power in the face of the social unrest. The departure of Marcos will concentrate minds in the US state machine on how to deal with such situations. In South Africa, too, social unrest opens up some possibilities for Russia. In view of the extent of the turmoil, there will have to be a lot of support from the West to stabilise the situation. In both cases, the capability of armies to fight Russian-backed forces is reduced, and the cost of the West's efforts to stabilise the situations is considerable - which may be cost-effective for Russia.

* * * *

The strategy of Russian imperialism is shaped by the necessity to respond to the overwhelming economical-military superiority of its American rival and to the powerful offensive of American imperialism that has dominated the imperialist chessboard over the past half-decade. Just as in the ascendant phase of capitalism when the price of economic failure for a capitalist enterprise was bankruptcy, extinction as an independent faction of capital, so in the epoch of state capitalism, the price of failure for an imperialist bloc in the politico-military struggle is also extinction, disappearance as an indepen-

dent faction of capital. It is this danger which haunts Russian imperialism today and which compels it to prepare for new political and military confrontations with its American rival, however great the odds against it. In the present epoch, this would involve an imperialist world war and the probable destruction of the human species itself.

The further confrontations between the two blocs in the unstable regions of the under-

developed world will lead to more and more butchery.

The one force that can stop this continuing bloodbath is the strengthening of the struggle of the world proletariat in the capitalist metropoles. Only that struggle can finally undermine all the war plans of both imperialist blocs.

Marlowe

TERRORISM

the real target of anti-terrorism: the class struggle

The wave of terrorist acts which have struck Belgium in 1985 occurred at a time when the bourgeoisie was orchestrating a campaign of demobilization and disinformation, and permitted it to launch an anti-terrorist campaign as part of a defense of democracy. Other European countries had already seen a wave of terrorist acts: Italy with the Red Brigades, France with Action Direct, West Germany with the RAF. While the media has been silent about the development of proletarian class struggle, it has spectacularly focused on every imaginable act of horror and barbarism, such as the airport massacres in Vienna and Rome, to divert attention from the only real perspective: the renewal of the class struggle. In Belgium, this phenomenon is being played out with the appearance of the "Fighting Communist Cells" (CCC), and has made it possible for the bourgeoisie to drown the social question and the reactions of the workers under the barrage of anti-terrorism. Basing its own monstrous exploitation on an unstated terror, capitalism cannot be overthrown without the revolutionary action of the proletariat. Marxists have always been clear on this point, as well as on the necessary methods of struggle. It would be easy to laugh at the pathetic efforts made by the bourgeoisie to identify the terrorists of the CCC with the class positions of the proletariat, were it not for the fact that there exists within the revolutionary movement today a certain number of groups putting forward a conception totally alien to the real practice of the proletariat, in the name of "workers terrorism". Therefore, it is necessary not merely to denounce the anti-terrorist campaign unleashed by the bourgeoisie, but also the confusions subsisting within certain proletarian groups about terrorism. This is critical to the question of precisely what kind of struggle is developing at the present time.

The capitalist system is historically condemned. It is necessary to overthrow it. But such a task can only be the work of the immense majority of workers acting in a conscious manner in and through political organs : the Workers Councils.

The stakes are high, because this campaign of the bourgeoisie seeks to disarm the working class and subject it to the pacifist ideology of the left, at the very moment when the working class is increasingly developing the will to refuse to accept the sacrifices demanded by the bourgeoisie and its trade unions so as to save the system. Marxists have always shown that the State is an instrument of oppression serving the interests of the economically dominant class and its mode of production. But today, with the decadence of capitalism the State has grown to monster proportions trying to maintain the survival of the system in the wake of permanent economic crisis and imperialist world wars. The development of state capitalism all over the world has led to the growth of totalitarianism and increasing violence in the hands of the State-State terror- as it tries to protect the system, east and west, from the threat of working class revolt.

Faced with this exploitation, the working class has no other solution than its violent revolt with which to respond to bourgeois terror. Despite its pacifist speeches the bourgeoisie has never ceased to exercise its terror: armed police on a war footing and scores of measures of intimidation have always been in place for use against the working class. Indeed, the bourgeoisie has only increased these means of intimidation and made them more sophisticated and pervasive in the 20th century. However, such overt violence is only utilized as a

desperate measure. The bourgeoisie seeks to avoid a frontal confrontation with the working class, and prefers to develop ideological campaigns so as to prevent the political unification of the proletariat. Whether it is in the name of "democracy" or "freedom", everything is put in place so that workers will join rallies in which the major aspect of social antagonisms -the class struggle- is denied.

In the past, the bourgeoisie could utilize broad, abstract, themes for its campaigns. Today, however, the stark reality of the crisis is increasingly apparent to the workers and gives the lie to such bourgeois phrase-mongering. The bourgeoisie accordingly utilizes campaigns seeking to develop pessimism and resignation: hunger in the world, poverty. The point is to make those who are unleashing a reaction against austerity feel guilty. These campaigns also make it possible for the left in opposition to expand its own work of diverting the proletariat from its specific class demands. These campaigns have not prevented the workers from increasingly engaging in direct resistance to capital, and from testing their collective strength.

But the bourgeoisie cannot afford to give up its ideological pressure on the working class. Thus we have the growth of today's anti-terrorist campaigns where the State tries to hide its real nature behind a fight for "democracy" against terrorism.

As we've seen, terror and intimidation (hidden or openly used against the workers) are an integral part of the state apparatus to maintain the status quo of exploitation. In the same way, terrorism in our time is increasingly if not overwhelmingly a phenomenon expressing the violence of States or proto-States trying to impose their will on the world arena. The scenes of terrorist attacks on airlines, airports, ships, police stations and/or shops in Beirut, Northern Ireland or Western Europe are the expression of Palestinian political organisations searching to set up "their" State against others (just as the proto-State of Israel used terrorism to set up its "legitimacy" 40 years ago), of the IRA, of warring factions in Lebanon, of the ETA, etc., aided and abetted by existing or nascent state machines. The use of fanatic suicide squads in the interests of one State against the other is the main reality of terrorism today. Far from being the antithesis of "legitimate" States, this proto-State terrorism is its mirror image, the logical extension of the capitalist state in its essence.

Gone are the days of the romantic anarchistic terrorists of the 19th century, petty bourgeois elements who mistakenly felt they could fight capitalism through individual exemplary acts of violence. Even in the 19th century, Marxism developed an intransigent critique of anarchism, seeing it as an ideology which in the 19th century expressed the despairing reactions of artisans and petty bourgeois elements to their pro-

letarianization. Marxism rejected the propaganda of the act' and the isolated violence of all kinds of terrorist elements alien to the class consciousness and organization of the proletarian movement.

Today, this period of romantic, futile revolt is definitively over. Anarchism as an organized movement showed by its participation in the bourgeois State during the war in Spain that it had crossed the class line.

Above all, however, with the development of state capitalism and the polarization of society, there is no longer any place for the "Robin Hood" mentality of the good outlaw, just as there is no longer any possibility of proletarianization for what remains of the classical petty-bourgeoisie in the West or for the dis-inherited masses of the "Third World". That process is finished in a period like ours, characterized by de-industrialization and the permanent crisis of the system.. Such elements are so marginalized, without hope, unless they link up with the struggle of the working class. Only a massive proletarian revolution can significantly alter the catastrophic course of capitalism today. Terrorism has definitely lost its old anti-capitalist veneer, to become one more phenomenon of manipulation recuperated by the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus. When it is not directly inspired by the state, it is only a morass in which marginal elements are taken in and skilfully recuperated by bourgeois propaganda as a focus for its campaigns of amalgalating gangsterism, terrorism and the violence of the working class.

In the '60's and '70's, we saw the Red Brigades, the RAF in Germany, Grapo (quite apart from the frustration that led to their formation after the student revolts) manipulated by agents infiltrated by "their own state" or foreign states, whose goals and programs they served. This was not a matter of a chance evolution on the part of those groups. Today, however, social forces are much more rapidly recuperated by the hydra of state capitalism. Clearly, the CCC in Belgium, Action Directe in France, have learned nothing from these experiences and are incapable of preventing the same trajectory.

For communists, there is no third way between state terror of any sort and the organized workers struggle. These terrorist groups do not serve the interests of the working class, and can only serve the interests of the bourgeois ideological machine against working class consciousness. The headquarters of banks, political parties, military installations-in a few short months, more than twenty terrorist acts have been claimed by the CCC in Belgium, a group unknown in the revolutionary milieu. The CCC justifies its actions with a language borrowed from leftism, mingled with a caricature of internationalist com-

munist positions. At the same time, there has occurred an impressive wave of uncontrolled gangsterism which has created a veritable state of panic within the population. Before all this, the state had publicized the "weakness" of its police apparatus in front of hundreds of thousands of television viewers during the bloody rioting that marked a football match in Brussels. Nothing more was therefore necessary to publicly justify the strengthening of repressive measures - all in the name of public security. Since then, the bourgeoisie has sought to create a situation in which the citizenry will be habituated to open repression - being stopped by the police, shadowed, house searches - as the normal course of events.

Tearful ministerial declarations, royal speeches, papal homilies, have succeeded one another, denouncing violence and defending the benefits of Western democracy. This is not all happening by chance. It is clear that the bourgeoisie cannot allow itself to openly confront a homogeneous, unified proletariat. It is seeking by every means possible to maintain and reinforce the atomization of the working class, to increase clivages, divisions; and it can only do this through vast ideological campaigns. The anti-terrorist campaign orchestrated by the Belgian bourgeoisie seeks in fact to draw the working class behind the defense of the democratic state, to make it believe that all violence - no matter what its source - puts the existence of everyone in danger, to strengthen the idea that those who confront the state can only be blind terrorist assassins, to equate communist positions with terrorism. All this, under cover of a hunt for terrorists, to be able to prevent any development of revolutionary positions within the working class.

The question of whether or not the CCC are agents provocateurs is of no interest in itself. It is certain that the bourgeoisie does not wait for violent terrorist acts to persecute revolutionaries and mobilize "public opinion" against workers in struggle. If it is true that history proves that, when needed, the bourgeoisie is quite capable of mounting provocations and creating terrorist acts, we do not conclude that all such acts are necessarily machinations. What is important, is the ideological utilization of such acts by the bourgeoisie against the working class and its political groups. The task of the revolutionaries is not one of police detectives, but of intransigent political denunciation.

We reject the terrorism of the CCC not because it sometimes does the work of the bourgeois state, but because it is a method of action alien to the proletariat and today completely inadequate for the development of the class struggle. Similarly, we reject all attempts at the theorization of such acts in the name of the working class, by reaffirming that working class violence is alien to terrorism or to bour-

geoisie terror.

Communists in no way condemn the varied manifestations of opposition to exploitation which arise within the working class. These are, on the contrary, the prelude to the general conflagration. However, the workers struggle is in no way limited to violence taken in itself. In effect, workers struggles, by revealing the economic contradictions of the system, pose the very conditions for the generalization of the struggle for a new society. The intervention of communists by no means consists in an exclusive concern with any one aspect of the struggle - violence, demands, organization - but rather in tracing the perspective for the general struggle of the class so that it can expand the maturation of consciousness. Enormous confusion on this subject exists within the revolutionary milieu, and certain groups, like the GCI and the ICP limit the role of the revolutionary organization to the detriment of its basic functions: thus, they privilege the military aspect to the detriment of the general role of the organization of revolutionaries.

Workers terrorism

The PLO, the IRA, ETA are in no way part of the working class movement. But neither is the CCC or AD. Their ranks may include elements who sincerely believe they are furthering working class aims (just as perhaps the pathetic hit squads can be convinced that they are "serving their people" by helping to build a new state). But if there are these sincere elements among the new rash of "desperado's" in Western Europe, their only service to the working class would be to leave this terrorist milieu recuperated by the bourgeoisie.

What concerns us is that even within the revolutionary milieu that calls itself marxist, certain groups like the ICP (Programme Communiste) and the GCI in Belgium have flirted with concessions to the ideology of terrorism under cover of what they call the "military" aspects of the class struggle."

While terrorism is only a blind and violent expression of an isolated minority, the violent reactions of the workers indicate the growth of social tension and, therefore, do not remain isolated, but illustrate the worsening of social relations; while terrorism is only the expression of social suicide, workers violence - even limited to a minority - is the expression of a potential capable of setting the whole system on fire, because it is the very emanation of the most glaring contradictions of the system.

Working class violence in struggle has nothing in common with the terror of firing at random into crowds. It has nothing in common with the futile posturing of blowing up banks either. The working class makes no cult of violence and has never done so in its whole history. Nor does it entrust the violence it deems necessary to bands

of self-appointed clandestine conspirators who pretend to act in its name or in the name of the "people". Workers can and do engage in sabotage and minority actions within the context of a struggle but they certainly do not need to be "organized" into this by roving groups of marginals or for that matter, by rank and file unionist who try to attract combative workers into premature or abortive "commando actions" to blow off steam and/or separate them from the masses of workers so as to more easily pick them off.

Instead of correctly posing the question of the historical nature of violence and of its social meaning, these various groups limit themselves to a tautology: violence equals violence. In this way, they pose no difference between violence in the service of oppression, destined to impose an exploitative relation, that is, bourgeois terror, and the violence of the oppressed classes revolting against the iron heel of capitalist exploitation. In theorizing the concept of "workers terrorism", these groups have, thereby, opened the door to all possible sorts of political adventures where minorities--however well intentioned they are--speak with guns and bombs in the name of the working class, but outside of any political control by the class itself. Such a theory ends up providing an ideological defense of the famous "heroic and exemplary act" dear to the anarchists, substituting themselves for the collective decisions made by the organs of struggle of the working class.

But these revolutionary groups apparently think that history has stood still since the 19th century and that when they see terrorism today it has the same meaning as, for example, the actions of the terrorist elements of the Narodniki in czarist Russia who, when there was as yet hardly any working class movement in that country, tried to spark the "people" by blowing up Grand Dukes and other officials. These revolutionary groups today are stuck in the past and have completely missed the facts of the 20th century and decadence just as they persist in underestimating class struggle today, which they see as too insignificant next to their unbridled activism.

In fact, neither the ICP nor the GCI have any real understanding of state capitalism; neither sees it as a universal tendency in all countries today. The ICP, with its support for "national liberation movements" as a step forward for the working class, flirted so long and hard with bourgeois elements like El Oumami in their organisation that their craze for so-called "red terror" led to the breakdown of their entire organization. The GCI has moved away from its earlier understanding of state capitalism and now rejects this entire concept. For them, it is impossible to

ignite the class movement without the mystifying concept of "workers terrorism". In failing to fully understand the marxist critique of terrorism in the past, these groups are now, when only the most intransigent and clear positions can help the working class to free itself, defending positions below the clarity of the past. Not only are they helping to further immerse sincere elements in confusion, but the defense of so-called 'workers terrorism' only provides a proletarian cover for the actions of the enemy class in terms of proto-state terrorism and the recuperation of the entire phenomenon.

The theory of "workers terrorism" expresses a complete incomprehension of the movement of the class struggle, and seeks to hide the difficulties that the working class experiences in rediscovering its historic struggle. It expresses the hesitation of the revolutionary milieu in recognizing all the components of the present period, as well as a distrust towards the struggle of the proletariat. Under the pretext of clandestinity, the refusal of open political confrontation in public meetings is justified, thereby leading confused political elements into a situation where clarification is impossible. In this way, the myth of the militant "will", organizer of the class, unfolds. Against such idealist currents, Marxism affirms the insufficiency of human will: men cannot transform the world when and as they want. The concretization of any subjective will depends on favorable objective conditions, effectively independent of this will. This does not at all mean that the voluntary factor doesn't intervene. However, the concept of "workers terrorism" reintroduces the idea of substitutionism, with a more wilful, more violent, minority assuming the responsibility of acting in the name of the less wilful mass. The theory of "workers terrorism" limits the intervention of revolutionaries to simple to a matter of strategy, this conception is totally alien to the marxist understanding of the struggle voluntarism, reducing the workers struggle of the proletariat. The proletarian struggle can only be the work of the immense majority of workers fighting against the alienation which ideologically chains them to the capitalist machine. The liberation of the working class cannot be accomplished by killing this or that individual supposedly responsible for exploitation. What is posed, rather, is the conscious overthrow of capitalist relations of production. Impelled by the historical necessity for the transformation of man's productive activity, new relations of production can only be brought

about by a conscious grasp of the necessity for it. It is this consciousness, which is the key to the collective action of the workers who are the decisive factor in this revolutionary transformation. It is in, and by, struggle that this potential will be strengthened, that the con-

sciousness of the necessity and possibility of this transformation will develop in a homogeneous and general way. Communists work for the strengthening of this process.

FD

the working class & revolutionaries confront the left in opposition

Any workers' struggle, wherever it takes place in the world and whatever its scope, is inevitably confronted with the agents of the capitalist state inside the working class : the unions and the left parties, the so-called "Socialist" and "Communist" parties. These bourgeois forces do everything they can to limit, stifle or derail workers' struggles. One of the main tasks of revolutionary groups in the present period is to try to accelerate the development of class consciousness by denouncing the left as clearly as possible, denouncing the bourgeois ideology it injects into the proletariat -- and the way it sabotages workers' struggles. It is in this context that we are publishing here a contribution from someone who is not a member of our Fraction. It tries to deal with some important aspects of the work of the left today by criticizing the vision developed by the International Communist Current. As an introduction to this contribution, we think it would be useful to deal with the work of the left from an historical point of view showing the similarities and differences between the 70's and the 80's.

A revolutionary denunciation of the left has nothing in common with the so-called "criticism" of the left put forward by leftists, trotskyists and others. In general, leftists only criticize the left when it adopts positions that are too blatantly counter-revolutionary (as for example when Mitterand in France imposes austerity measures on the workers or when unions refuse to work together and openly divide the workers). But leftists applaud the left when it does its sabotage in a "unified" way (as for example when unions organize together to show a "radical" front to the government). This policy of the leftists doesn't denounce the official left -- it merely serves to make this left more acceptable, more credible, to the workers.

A revolutionary attitude towards the left is a completely different thing. For revolutionaries, the left is part and parcel of the state apparatus of capitalism. The capitalist state integrated the left for a specific function : to control the working class. Specialized in this function, the left has developed a whole series of strategies and weapons that vary according to the period. This means that revolutionaries, if they really want to contribute to the development of class consciousness, cannot be content to denounce the left in general terms but must try to see how, concretely, the left undermines the workers' efforts towards consciousness at any given time.

In this respect, the end of the 70's saw an important change in the bourgeois policies of the left. By the end of the 70's the left ceased to center its work around mainly electoralist mystifications, around the illusion that a change in government would bring a change in society. This corresponded to the breakdown of the "Programme Commun" in France, the end of the "historic compromise" in Italy etc. At the same time, there was a tendency for the left to confine itself to, or be ejected into, the opposition rather than directly participating in government. The ICC was able to detect this tendency right from the beginning in 1979-80. In the six years since this analysis was put forward, the political evolution of the situation in a great number of countries has confirmed its validity : the maintaining of the "right" factions in government in the US and Britain; the fact that the Social Democracy passed into the opposition in Germany and Belgium. As with any other general tendency, this one cannot be mechanistically applied to all particular local situations. The persistence of a part of the left in government in certain countries (France, Sweden, Spain) is caused by historical and conjunctural

factors moving against this general tendency which we will not go into here. But these "exceptions" only confirm the rule in that where a part of the left has been led to assume governmental responsibilities, another part of the left has rapidly joined the opposition (the Communist Parties in France and Spain).

One important result of this passage of the left parties into the opposition was that it freed the unions to control the working class through more "radical" oppositional language. Certain factions of the union apparatus could therefore dispense with the old slogans of "don't struggle, vote" in favor of new ones -- "the struggle against the right and austerity"; "mobilization of the masses" etc. This change in the method of control is the reflection of an important change in the conditions of working class struggle.

If we remember back, the workers' struggles of the end of the 60's and the beginning of the 70's were sparked by a relatively low level of economic crisis. In these struggles, the proletariat raised very general issues : the question of the existence of a crisis and the way to manage society. There was not yet enough built-up experience to realize that the crisis would only get worse and worse, cutting down the workers' standard of living. Workers were not yet aware that the crisis revealed a far-reaching bankruptcy of the capitalist system as a whole. Nor did they see that the left would consistently sabotage their struggles. That was why the workers were easily led off their class terrain into leftist mystifications about "a new way to run society".

But by the end of the 70's, these electoralist and parliamentary mystifications of the preceding period were wearing thin, losing their hold. The trend changed towards the left in opposition. This trend was strengthened by the discredit that fell on the left parties as a result of their adopting anti-working class austerity measures while in government. This change to the left in opposition was also a reaction to workers' struggles re-emerging, after a period of pause from 1974-79, around questions directly touching working conditions, especially the question of lay-offs (Denain-Longwy 1979 in France, the steel strike in 1979-80 in Great Britain). Because of a rapid deterioration in the living and working conditions of workers in all countries, struggles were sparked off by problems such as : how to resist the closing of a factory, the decline in wages, the increase in unemployment. Where to go for solidarity, who to count on, what type of organizing could help the struggle? The unions did all they could to tail-end these concerns of the workers. The left parties developed campaigns of mystification around problems directly related to the problems of the working class -- campaigns on the reduction of labor time, on pacifism, on democracy-- and the unions kept a relative control

over struggles through slogans co-opting and recuperating the workers' immediate preoccupations into a bourgeois context.

So, there are indeed differences between the strategy used by the left in the 70's and the 80's. But it would be a mistake to fall into a schematism that caricatures these differences. Revolutionary organizations are not exempt from this kind of schematism as the evolution of the International Communist Current on this question shows. The vision that this organization has developed over the last two years on the left in opposition is that the left can no longer mobilize the proletariat today because its mystifications are all used up. The left must hide from the workers its supposed "lack of alternatives" by using radical language. From now on it will sabotage struggles from within and its only work would be to demobilize workers in relation to austerity.

As the contribution we are printing below correctly emphasizes, this vision completely ignores the ideological work of the left in opposition. It is true that the main task of the left today is to assume a role of demobilizing the proletariat from its class terrain. But this role is, at the same time, to mobilize the proletariat on a bourgeois terrain. Although this latter aspect is not in the forefront today, it has not disappeared. It is secondary today only because the left is unable to carry out this mobilization, because the proletariat is turning its back on these mystifications and is refusing this mobilization on a bourgeois terrain. But the left has to keep trying. This work of ideologically undermining struggles goes right along with the physical control of struggles -- the sabotage of extension and self-organization. These two aspects are very closely linked. For example, it's the bourgeois idea of sectoralism (the idea that workers' problems are specific to a particular industrial branch) that allowed the left and the unions to prevent the extension of the miners strike in Britain to other sectors in 1984. It's the mystification of regionalism that allows the unions in Belgium to pit workers in Dutch-speaking Flanders against those in French-speaking Wallonia. It's the idea of bourgeois nationalism that allowed Solidarnosc to limit the mass strike in Poland to the national boundaries. And there are many other examples. Every time the left manages to limit and control struggles, it's by using and encouraging bourgeois mystifications. And in the same way, limiting struggles to one factory, one category, one region, allows the left to further spread its ideological poison. Even more, it's through this capacity to turn the workers' immediate demands onto a bourgeois terrain that the left keeps control over struggles. Workers' struggles against lay-offs and factory closures are derailed towards demands to "save our factory" and efforts to prove the "profitability" of a given enterprise. Struggles against

unemployment are derailed towards bourgeois demands of "a job for everyone" or "reduction of work schedules to create more jobs", etc. Tendencies towards extension and self-organization and politicisation are recuperated by the unions which put themselves forward as the only "efficient" organ of struggle, organizing extensions emptied of all proletarian content (for example, the forced generalization by the unions of a strike begun by militant railroad workers in Belgium in Sept. 1983 to all public sector workers in order to dilute militancy with hesitating, unmotivated strikers). Unions will even start strikes so as to head off any initiatives from workers themselves (like in the Renault strike in France in 1985). The fact that illusions about unions persist among the workers -- despite the lessons of reality -- is linked to the conditions of struggle today. Under pressure from the crisis, workers are increasingly preoccupied by the concrete problems of their daily existence. In this situation, the "realism" of solutions offered to them becomes a primary issue. The whole task of the left is to convince workers that revolution is "unrealistic" and that the only "realism" is to fight for "your" company with a "solid" organization represented by a union. And when workers' struggles try to push back the austerity measures of the bourgeoisie and return to the status quo (a generally impossible task), the left uses all its powers to hammer home the impossibility of such aspirations and to make workers identify the defense of their living conditions with the defense of the factory.

This analysis leads us to reject the thesis defended by the ICC today which holds that the left is now occupying the terrain of workers' struggles. The whole press of the organization is full of this error : "The proletariat cannot and must not let the left parties and unions freely manoeuvre on the terrain of the defense of their living conditions ..." (International Review #44). The result of this inability to recognize that the left has continued to carry out its ideological work is the simplistic and mistaken notion that radical factions of the bourgeoisie occupy "the terrain of the class interests of the proletariat". This means that the left can be identified with the workers' interests and that there is a "terrain of workers' struggles" defined by the existence of economic demands independently of the social function in class struggle of those who put forward these demands. But in the period of capitalist decadence, in the era of state capitalism, of the integration of mass parties and unions into the machinery of the totalitarian state of capi-

tal; in the period of the impossibility of reforms in a situation of permanent crisis and the objective necessity of the communist revolution (an era begun with the first world war), there is no longer any possibility of distinguishing the defense of the immediate interests of the working class from its historic interests, the revolution.

So in this era, struggles on the proletarian terrain -which means that they are waged by workers collectively for their working class interests- necessarily contain a dynamic towards increasing mass participation, self-organisation and sharper confrontations with the bourgeoisie and its state, its unions.

So it's indicative of the ICC's confusion that it sees actions which have precisely the opposite characteristics -a growing desertion and hostility on the part of the masses of workers and a glossing over of the antagonism between the class interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat- as taking place on the proletarian terrain, solely because the bourgeoisie organised them around mystifications that have real workers concerns like unemployment or layoffs as a starting point.

The second effect of the left in opposition on class struggle is that it cuts into the impact of the intervention of revolutionaries. The more the left tail-ends the workers, the more difficult it becomes for the workers to get rid of them and the more revolutionaries have to have a clear idea of the way proletarian struggle and consciousness develops and the way the bourgeoisie tries to counteract this growing consciousness. An inadequate analysis of these problems inevitably has a negative effect on intervention in that revolutionary groups can be fooled by the radical verbiage of the left in opposition and make important concessions to bourgeois ideology. The ICC is a startling example of such an involution. Its idea that the left no longer carries out ideological demolition in the working class but merely "occupies the terrain of the defense of the living conditions of the proletariat", avoiding any mobilization of workers, inevitably turns into a justification of the ICC's call to join demonstrations with a bourgeois content. (See our article in this issue on "Days of Action"). The ICC's inability to recognize that workers still see the defense of their living conditions as a defense of the factory or of their work category (an illusion that the left encourages with all its might), leads it

to say nothing at all about these problems. The ICC offers only the perspective of extension and self-organization until these words take on the character of a magical incantation. The ICC's inability to recognize phases where the struggle diminishes in intensity and scope -- phases which the left tries to pass off as a sign of demoralization but which are really moments when workers step back and think after struggles and before new outbursts of combativity -- leads it to fall into the bourgeois

dilemma of thinking it has to choose between "passivity or union mobilizations". The ICC has chosen to call for participation in the latter.

These few examples should suffice to show how weaknesses in the analysis of the dynamic of proletarian struggles and of the counter-offensive of the bourgeoisie leads to falling into bourgeois traps. The contribution we are printing here, written before our tendency was excluded from the ICC, develops these points more fully.

Adèle

CORRESPONDENCE ON REVOLUTIONARY INTERVENTION

Contrary to what its majority proclaims, the current convulsions of the ICC have nothing to do with questions like "Do we have to intervene in the struggle or not?" "Do we overestimate or underestimate the role of revolutionaries?" "Must the emphasis be on intervention or on theoretical deepening?"

What's really happening is the degeneration of the ICC, the destruction by this organisation, despite all its talk about the danger of councilism, of its own potential with regard to the creation of a revolutionary party: the transformation of its intervention into a democratic comedy, giving in to the left and the leftist/unionist ideology instead of fighting against it.

This text criticizes only one aspect of this degeneration: intervention. It is a crucial aspect: the mistakes that are accumulated on this question run the risk of directly contributing to a reversal of the historic course. There are many other aspects of the ICC's evolution that urgently need to be rectified. But we must also make clear that all theoretical errors lead to a wrong practice, a wrong intervention. And it is necessary to deny the repeated charges of the ICC-majority that "the minority are those who are frightened of intervention, they are the theoreticians, the academics." All the critiques of the minority are concerned with intervention and aim to maintain its revolutionary character.

A. THE PRESSURE OF IDEOLOGY

1. The importance of the period

Since the beginning of our analysis on the left in opposition, it was said that this change would make our work of denunciation and demystification of the left much more difficult. This proved to be true. We had it all mapped out. Decisive battles were coming and, faced with this prospect, the

left would move further to the left than ever; it would search for its "natural environment", the opposition. Since 1979, everything we theorised about the struggles and the evolution of the left has been verified.

Our work has become more practical, more urgent. Our presence is required everywhere. Everything that's going on, all the questions that are posed call for an answer by revolutionaries. What we have theorised in isolation is posed everywhere: in strikes, in riots, in all the problems, the searching, the confusions in which millions of exploited lose themselves.

At the same time, the left is everywhere. And nothing is easier than to be intimidated, impressed by ideology. Because now, it is a struggle that we must wage.

The work of revolutionaries requires an enormous courage, a perspicacity (which doesn't mean that one has to be a big intellectual) to pierce all the beautiful words, all the rousing speeches, all the appearances with which the enemy covers reality. Everything must be criticised, Marx said it early on, but how difficult it is!

This isn't a strictly intellectual problem that doesn't exist. And it isn't merely a problem of analyzing the evolution of the struggles - to see, for instance, their renewal. The problem is always more practical, going beyond the terrain of analysis, description. It is in the first place a problem of subjective attitude, of taking a position. What's so difficult is not so much to see, to grasp the level of struggle. That means little if we have no role in them. The bourgeoisie can do that too. The most difficult thing is to know what we must do and say in these struggles and to analyse them with that in mind. That is difficult because it implies fighting and also because it really means grappling

with the ideology, the mystification, everything that impedes the struggle.

2. The role of ideology

Ideology is one of the essential assets of the bourgeoisie and especially the left. A heap of nice words, that hide everything. The whole language, our language, it's theirs and they know how to use it. And they must use it to avoid being openly discredited. Everything we can say is in the verbal arsenal of the bourgeoisie. The revolution, the party, the workers movement, the mobilisation of the masses, liberty... they have it all. Only in appearances of course but this masking of reality by appearances is essential. The difference between them and us is a much more practical question

Oh no, there's no need to be mean or machiavellian to be bourgeois. One can be a great humanist, a great anarchist, a great "revolutionary". It's even often preferable. And what it really means is the material practice which the intellectuals, by definition don't understand

3. The ideology of the left in opposition

A centerpiece in the current digressions of the ICC is the hooplah about the "demobilisation" of which the left and the unions are supposedly guilty. This is linked with the blather about the "absence of a program", the "absence of perspectives" of the left.

That's really too easy. The left does nothing and that's it. What the ICC more and more openly reproaches the left with, is that it doesn't do its dirty work.

And it's quite convenient: if the left doesn't do any thing, there's no need to fight it, no need to get embroiled.

The first big argument is that we are in a period of sharp crisis and upsurge of struggle. The situation is dangerous and the bourgeoisie is cornered. That's short term-journalism. The bourgeoisie is preparing in the current period for its long-term goals. It must overturn the historical course. In the logic of the ICC there are no other means to that goal but open sabotage. The bourgeoisie has no economic means because the crisis is irresolvable. But what about its ideology?

Without ideology, open sabotage is inefficient. The ideology, the program of the left, that's what the ICC hides, using 2 pretexts:

- the depth of the crisis which makes all the promises of the left sound ridiculous, incredible .

- it is vital that the workers are "mobilised" but when the left talks about "mobilisation" it only takes over the concerns of the workers in order to better deceive them.

Indeed, when journalists asked (French CP-boss) Marchais what he had to oppose to the politics of the current government, he said, "our program, is the mobilisation of the masses" or of the people.

And at the moment of elections, the 'civilized' left (not to mention the far left which always has at its disposal the banks and holdings, excuse me, their nationalisation) always goes in the direction of promises of a couple of hundred thousand jobs. But that's not serious, says the ICC, the left has no serious solutions to the crisis and this "mobilisation of the masses" proves clearly that it can't do anything else but "occupy the social terrain", to go with the workers in order to better sabotage their struggles, without a real program or perspectives. The left is limited to being mean, to "demobilise", "demoralise", "exhaust" and "divide" the workers.

But on what basis? Intimidation and terror aren't enough and besides, they have other cops to do that. Cunning machinations? But then we enter into psychology and than it would be enough for the workers to be cunning too. Even sectorial division isn't sufficient, since the overall goal is the generalisation of bourgeois control.

They need a program, a perspective, an ideology. That means a vision of society that can be used as a barrier against the revolutionary perspective. And it is on that level that there exists a clear coherence between the practice of the PCF, the CGT-union and all the others.

For the ICC, there is no coherence as long as the bourgeoisie is not explicit and honest. But the bourgeoisie is forced to mask its real program. There is only one bourgeois program: the submission and over-exploitation of the workers, their ideological and physical control for the Holy necessity to export or die and, finally, world war. This is present in everything they say. There are variations, stages, divisions of labor, but this program is present in all parties, in all the variations.

When the left talks about "mass mobilisation", it does not do so without the pressure of struggles. This talk corresponds to the necessity of subduing the present struggles which at the same time prepares the next stage. That is possible because the development of struggles isn't linear: there are still big defeats. And it's a good thing that its "mass mobilisations" aren't succeeding because they are but ideological and physical mobilisations into demo's with a nationalist tendency. We must be clear on this. When the ICC says in all its public meetings that the current unionist mobilisations are focused on the concerns of the workers, it gives these mobilisations credibility.

When the left mobilizes or when it sabotages strikes, it is to impose its own perspective on the workers and when it clings to the struggles, it is to give credibility to its control, to impose the perspective of marching behind a party that promises pie in the sky before promising the delights of the solidarity of sacrifices for the national economy and the delights

or martyrdom or victory in the war. All this doesn't exist for the ICC because we live in a period of struggles and beyond the struggles there is...nothing. For the bourgeoisie, the sabotage of the struggle is useless if the next stage—the mobilisation for bourgeois interests—is not prepared. Otherwise the workers would have the time to recover and to draw the lessons. There are several reasons why the ICC is no longer interested in the economic and other programs of the left and the unions.

First, because of its activism. What counts for the ICC is its mobilisation, whether it happens on the terrain of the struggles or not. Whether the workers are fighting or not doesn't interest the ICC. How they struggle and why doesn't interest it either. We are not "the referees" of the workers struggle. No more need for a critical attitude, that's what it means.

There is also its idealism. The perspectives of the left aren't of any interest to the ICC because it is not interested either in the goals of the struggle, or in its demands. The goal is the revolution, communism, and that's a slogan in the air. But the demands are essential in the struggle because they unmask the wage relations, the exploitation. Without "economic" demands wage-labor can't be called into question. Without them, there is no other per-

spective but new forms of austerity and misery, managed by new bosses. That's why we must reject all the talk about "the politicisation" of the struggles. The struggles for economic demands are political. "Economic" demands will remain indispensable to call wage-labor into question, until the end of the period of transition. Otherwise there is no other perspective than misery managed by the "workers councils".

And the struggle against these demands is essential in the efforts of the left and the unions to undermine the proletariat. That's why they have their programs for managing the economy. That's why the unions advance proposals for a better management during strikes, to transform them into quarrels over management. The argument of the ICC is that these proposals aren't "serious" because they are unrealistic and inefficient in the current stage of a deepening of the crisis. But what does that matter? There is nothing efficient in whatever the bourgeoisie, the left as well as the right, is doing on the economic level. But nevertheless it continues to dominate society.

Such arguments undermine the idea that a historical course of rising struggle is a necessity: If the problem were really that the economic programs of the bourgeoisie aren't viable, then the revolution would be inevitable. Unless the proletariat is to blame, but then the course is towards war precisely because the bourgeoisie has no more viable perspectives to develop its economy. And all the talk about the supposed fact that the develop-

ment of armaments and of the social shock-breakers would have reached their point of saturation (in contrast to the situation in the '30's) is only used to introduce the idea that a course towards war is no longer possible, to accustom us to immediatist follies about the unavoidable character of the revolution.

And the whole economic argument is based upon the myth that the armaments-policy was economically more efficient in the '30's than today, that there was less saturation of markets-on the armaments-market and elsewhere. But it's precisely because that didn't solve anything that world war could break out. There is nothing "serious" or "rational" in what the bourgeoisie prepares.

War doesn't resolve anything either. The bourgeoisie congratulates itself for having overcome the crisis of the '30's. And the ICC is impressed by it like the

others, which explains its tendency to make believe that the measures taken in the '30's had something more efficient. But they were only based upon the political defeat of the working class and its overexploitation, nothing else. That's what gave the anachronistic system the means to put on some airs of rationality. The mythology of the '30's, that's also the mythology around social security. It's precisely because the bourgeoisie always hides that social security is developed on the backs of the workers and at the price of a greater political submission, that it could create the impression of having still something to offer. In the absence of "serious solutions", they still have ideology and that it's even more crucial. It's very important that they still have their people to shout about more jobs, to promise 500 000 new employments, to focus demands, through campaigns on the reduction of worktime, on the organisation of partial or other unemployment and the lowering of wages, the division of jobs. This reinforces the idea that a worker must be satisfied with very little in his living conditions and work, that the national interest, the "solution of the unemployment-problem", the "solution of the crisis" are so much more important.

Everything the ICC says—and doesn't say—on this subject, strengthens the idea the left can do nothing else but identify in a machiavellian way with the concerns of the workers, in order to deceive them better. So, when the ICC calls upon combative workers to go to all unionist demo's, its first argument is that these mobilisations are about the problems of the workers:austerity, unemployment... But that's false. These mobilisations are about giving credibility to those who organise austerity and unemployment, and they serve to orchestrate their imposition by means of an entire ideological strategy. That's the purpose of economic programs like the reduction of worktime. They are used to accustom workers to walk

behind the banners of the unions -while forgetting about their own struggle and the unionist sabotage. And the only thing for which the ICC reproaches the unions concerning their "days of action" is that they don't do their dirty work of "mobilisation", which, for the ICC, equals the struggle. That way the ICC ends up denying the autonomous struggle. In Internationalisme # 103 and Welt Revolution 20 the ICC reproaches those who criticizes this policy, saying that they prefer "to wait for the eruption of a spontaneous and autonomous class movement." Mr. trotskyites of the ICC, we know very well that this autonomous and spontaneous movement exists, that there is no need to wait for it. We know this because we don't let ourselves be fooled by appearances and by the non-linear character of its development. For your critics, the alternative is not to mobilise or to stay home. They go to the unionist mobilisations to fight the unions. And the struggle, the life of the class, takes place elsewhere.

If the unions don't mobilise well, it is because the mobilisation for their goals is a long term-job. Precisely because there are struggles, the risks that these demo's would overflow onto the proletarian terrain are great. But the ICC doesn't facilitate that. It's slogans, like those in the Paris-demo on the 30th of May last year, are inoffensive, are aimed to be acceptable to the unions. Any union-chief could support slogans like "workers-unemployed, same struggle." They say nothing about what's at stake: the reality of the autonomous struggle, of its potentialities which are deepseatedly anti-unionist and revolutionary. The same is true for slogans like : "transform those demo's into workers struggle". This doesn't say anything about the forces that are opposing each other nor about the rupture with the union-control which the struggle implies. For every struggle is a confrontation with the unions and their cronies, because every struggle is an attack on the existing order, on the legality and the submission which the unions try to perpetuate. That's what the ICC doesn't understand. That's why it thinks that denouncing the unions and the left is only a negative aspect of our work. Our work always goes against the current, because our class goes against the current, because it is in struggle.

The ICC integrates itself more and more in the unionist comedy, in all its ideological aspects. For instance during a "day of action" in Spain last june 20, against the reform of social security, the ICC reproached the unions for not evoking this day of action in one of the local strikes (there were many at that time, with sometimes remarkable efforts towards extension) while this day of action was around a problem that concerns all workers: social security (Accion Proletaria 63). But what does that mean, a day of action of the unions against the reform of social securi-

ty? It means very concretely, the mobilisation for the unionist strike, for the generalisation of unionist control and the strengthening of the idea that the unions guarantee the "social attainments", while it's they who help to organise the impoverishment with agreements on all levels, from the central state to the local factory.

Worse, the ICC blocks the political evolution of anti-unionist elements, by making them believe that the life of the class goes through the mobilisation by the unions, and that if you don't go to all these demo's, you can only "stay home" to wait for autonomous struggle. It imprisons these elements in so called unemployed committees instead of saying to them clearly that they are not "the unemployed" but politicized elements. It is because the ICC allows itself to be fooled by appearances, by ideology, that it has become incapable of really denouncing the unions and the left in general.

Its vision doesn't go beyond the short term. So either it gives in to the unions or it repeats abstract slogans which are less and less understood by the ICC itself. It is because the ICC no longer sees what it can reproach the unions and the left for that so many articles and leaflets limit themselves to talking, with some indignation, about the "radical language" of the unions, about the fact that they "pretend" this or that, that they "pretend" to generalise the movement, that they 'pretend' to organise wildcat strikes. The ICC doesn't see the ideological imprisonment, the goon squads, the false perspectives and that's why it sees the unions as mean organisations which pretend to identify themselves with the concerns of the workers. All that turns towards involuntary propaganda for the unions. And towards voluntary submission. Because the ICC is impressed by all this talk about the workers movement, about the mobilisation of the masses, about the unity and the solidarity of the workers, with which the left has no other goal but the docile acceptance of union-control and the submission by the whole of the class "in solidarity".

Of course the left doesn't seem to have a "serious" program. Since 1914 the program of the bourgeoisie has been the same: competition to death leading to world war. The left is there only to prepare the workers for that by creating a spirit of submission and of discipline, by derailing the preoccupations of the workers towards those of the bosses and the state, by preaching solidarity in submission. But since the unions don't say openly that this is the goal of their "mobilisation", of their identification with workers' preoccupations, this doesn't count for the ICC.

THE CALL TO TRADE UNION DAYS OF ACTION: AN INCOMPREHENSION OF THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARIES

INTRODUCTION

In the previous issue of our magazine, we published, under the heading "DOCUMENTS", a general article criticizing the intervention of the ICC. This text was written when we were still an organized minority within the ICC. It was an attempt to denounce the confusion the ICC is spreading in the working class through interventions whose clarity and consistency with theoretical principles have yet to be demonstrated.

An example of this confusion is the ICC's calls to join all the demonstrations and "Days of Action" organized by the unions.* The goal of this article is to analyze how trade union demonstrations and days of action are inscribed in the rapport de forces between the bourgeoisie and proletariat today, and to lay bare the roots of the ICC's errors in intervention with respect to this question. As a matter of principle, revolutionaries are against the unions and do not participate in the various actions by which the unions control the working class. The role of revolutionaries is to intervene in the working class so as to develop its struggle and all its efforts at organization against the unions. When in 1979, the ICC called workers to a

demonstration in Paris it was in a very specific framework: in the context of a large movement of struggle, with a section of the working class trying to extend the battle and the unions attempting to recuperate and channel this initiative by jumping into the drivers seat. Whether revolutionaires do or do not directly call on workers to rally and demonstrate depends entirely on the analysis that they make of the rapport de forces between the classes at a given moment. Breaking with this framework, the ICC's repeated calls to participate in demonstrations called by the unions throughout 1985 were based on the general argument of the existence of a third wave of struggle, and more precisely, on 2 contradictory arguments:

On the one hand, a vision of today's wave of struggle that sees it as so strong that it is already capable at any time, at any place, of breaking through union control. On the other hand, a vision of the working class as being sapped by councilism which plunges it into such hesitation and passivity that the role of revolutionaries today is to shake the class out of its torpor by exhorting it to get together, to rally, in no matter what form, at any cost, including even demonstrations specifically called by the bourgeoisie to destroy initiatives towards class consciousness and deviate workers into bourgeois answers to their deepest concerns.

This inability to make the function of revolutionaries clear in the daily practice of intervention is not just a fortuitous mistake. It flows from a series of fundamental incomprehensions, among them an inability to understand the process by which class consciousness develops and thus the role of revolutionaries in relation to it; a schematic vision of the present wave of class struggle and the link between a political extension of struggles and the weight of the left factions of the bourgeoisie.

We don't have the space here to develop all the theoretical aspects of these different questions. We are therefore going to concentrate on how the ICC sees its role today in relation to its systematic calls

* This can be seen in the following quotation from the ICC's "International Revue" # 44: "The only way workers can spring this trap -and revolutionaries must encourage them in this- is not to turn away from these kind of actions (union demonstrations and days of action) but on the contrary use every opportunity for workers to assemble together around issues affecting their class interests, even when they derive from union manoeuvres". (p 14-15). The fact that the ICC seeks to mitigate the universal character of its tactic by writing several lines later that "calling for workers to be present in such movements is not a recipe that can be applied in all circumstances" only reflects its wishy-washiness and zig zags on this question.

'to workers to join union demonstrations.

II THE PRESENT SITUATION

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"

This phrase from the first chapter of the Communist Manifesto is striking for its accuracy today. Our period is indeed a time of increasing and decisive confrontations between the classes. The bourgeoisie remains the ruling class and is far from capitulating despite the mortal economic crisis of its system; but the proletariat is continuing its slow and uneven course towards the assertion of its own class perspectives, and ultimately towards the communist revolution. The wave of international class struggle of the past 2 years is an example of this: it expresses the progress and deepening of class consciousness among workers and, at the same time, it shows the uneven and heterogeneous nature of this process.

Despite their apparent contradiction, these 2 aspects express all the richness and significance of the present period. They bring out the crucial nature of the role of revolutionaries and how important it is that revolutionaries take their responsibilities seriously.

Although we appreciate the ICC's capacity to recognize this 3rd wave of struggle and its major characteristics, we must no less denounce its fundamental incomprehension of the real state of the confrontation between the classes. This latter is characterized -on the general plane of analysis- by a "fetishization" of this third wave, a mechanistic application of a general potential, and, in practice, by a lack of confidence in the strength and positive dynamic of the working class, an attitude of activism and impatience which ends up favoring short term agitational success over the defense of principles.

The third wave of struggles was initially marked by large scale movements (Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark). But now its potential, as well as the deepening of class consciousness, is expressed by an acute state of tension within the working class, provoking the outbreak of small, scattered, but incessant struggles. The wave of struggles since 1983 has also seen an accentuation of the phenomenon of de-unionization, characterized by the reduction in the number of workers belonging to the unions, by a poorer response to strikes called by the unions, as well as the unleashing , and frequent number, of strikes outside of union control. In this framework, it was foreseeable that the demonstrations called by the unions in France, Germany, Great Britain, etc. would fail to rally large masses of the working class. Rather, the real dynamic of the struggle today takes the form of a movement opposed to the unions, characterized by certain unemployed committees

in France which refused to march in the (unionist) demonstration organized by Pagat in May 1985.

It was the same in Hamburg, where the unemployed committees, despite the appeals of the ICC, refused to participate in national demonstrations organized by the unions, arguing that they wanted to meet active workers -but only on their own class terrain.

Union demonstrations and "days of action" which we have seen this past year have practically all been attempts at making the unions credible again, and discrediting the whole tendency to activity and self-organization by the class, through isolated actions with a spectacular, but phoney radical facade, as opposed to the real expression of the wrath of the working class that the unions tried to channel. These demonstrations and "days of action" bear witness to an ideological offensive of the bourgeoisie. Not to see this is to deny the whole process of autonomous organization in the class, and comes down to going against this process and in the direction opposite to that of the actual class movement. With the appeals that the ICC makes today to join such demonstrations, it disowns the clearest elements by asking them to join the phoney actions organized by the bourgeoisie. Therefore what the ICC proposes is no longer to push forward the existing dynamic to fight against the efforts at recuperation by the unions, but to transform the initiatives of the bourgeoisie into rallies with a proletarian content.

There are no lack of examples to show the error and the failure of this policy of the ICC : the appeal to massively join the CGT (Stalinist) demonstration at Renault in May '85, which rallied nobody; the demonstration organized by the English trade unions in "solidarity" with the victims of repression, which marked the definitive burial of the British miners movement; the union-demonstrations (already cited) for the unemployed in France and national demonstrations in Germany, forsaken by the unemployed; as well as the many actions of the CGT in France: none of these expressed the dynamic of the working class, none of these rallied the living forces and most active working class elements.

The ICC today is marked by an incapacity to grasp in a concrete fashion the present balance of forces between the two classes, an incomprehension of the positive dynamic expressed by the working class, as well as a lack of understanding of its own role in this dynamic. This has led the ICC to develop a vision of the working class which- because it is not sufficiently active for its taste- must be assisted by its clearest vanguard to shake off its passivity.

The ICC has thus theorised a revolutionary practice around 2 slogans: "mobilization" and "the confrontation with the left and

the unions"

1. Mobilization

In the work of its 6th International Congress, the ICC presents the current tactic of the bourgeoisie as amounting to a simple, permanent, effort at demobilization. This is clear in the following quotation from "International Review # 44 ("the 6th Congress of the ICC"):

When the workers have for decades clung to the illusion that they can only wage the struggle in the framework of the trade unions and with their support, the loss of confidence in these organs leads them to resort to passivity in answer to the so-called "calls for struggle" coming from the unions. This is precisely the game the unions are playing more and more: incapable of any long-term mobilization of the workers behind their banners and slogans, they are skilfully using the passivity and scepticism with which their appeals are met with the aim of transforming this passivity into demoralization... (p 14)

One is already astounded at the amalgam made between the proletariat's loss of confidence in the bourgeoisie and in its own strength. But this is not what is most surprising. The ICC no longer encumbers itself with details of that sort, and with its concern "to get to the heart of the matter", making the demobilization of the working class and its passivity its hobby-horse, it quite naturally draws the following as its conclusion, in this same article of its "International Review" :

The only way workers can spring this trap -and revolutionaries must encourage them in this- is not to turn away from these kind of actions but on the contrary use every opportunity for workers to assemble together around issues affecting their class interests, even when they derive from union manoeuvres, participating in them as actively and as massively as possible in order to transform them into places expressing the unity of the class beyond sectorial divisions, the combativity and determination of the proletariat, as was the case for example with the May 1st demonstration in Hamburg. (p. 14-15)

We could cite many other articles of the ICC illustrating such appeals. But what we have cited , the result of the 'deepening' brought about by the 6th congress, already contains more than enough confusions to demonstrate the aberration of this position. From the first quotation, it is already possible to conclude that, if the class has difficulty in going from the loss of illusions to the affirmation of its own perspective, the means to overcome this difficulty is to push as far as possible this loss of illusions, so that the antagonism between the interests of the unions and those of the class become as clear as possible. It is only with that consciousness that the working class can recognize its own

perspective and the means to develop it. The question of mobilization in itself, without asking what is the content of this mobilization, is a false question. In the past, we have seen the working class massively mobilized in demonstrations against war, behind the national flag, without this mobilization constituting, in itself, any positive element for the class. Therefore, what is critical, is to determine on what terrain the class is mobilized and why. Bourgeois demonstrations, organized solely to thwart the development of proletarian class consciousness, can only have one basis: to make the proletariat give up its own class terrain; to shift its own dynamic towards alternatives which despite their radical appearance are emptied of their proletarian political content. The bourgeoisie can only assure such a political perversion by hiding what's at stake, by confusing the issues.

There are two fundamental elements that the ICC no longer sees: First, the ideological weight that the unions oppose to the development of proletarian class consciousness, and therefore to the essential difference that exists, and will always exist, so long as the two antagonistic classes exist. Second, the antagonistic character of their interests and the specific terrains on which these interests develop. Thus, when the ICC asserts that "unions maneuvers" can be transformed into "occasions where the unity and combativity of the class is expressed", it denies this antagonistic character, making the capitalist unions into organs in which the workers can develop their own class dynamic. In setting itself the objective of at any cost putting an end to this "passivity" of the class, not only does the ICC no longer see the ideological traps set by the unions, but, in addition, it falls itself into these very traps, drawing the working class into the false alternative of "mobilization or passivity". This joins hands with the radical leftists and rank and file unionists who do "something" by hurling themselves into spectacular or "hard" actions, thus delineating the difference between their "activity" and the "passivity" of an amorphous class, itself responsible for the lack of impact and result of these union mobilizations, which remain isolated because of its own passivity.

The mobilization of the proletariat occurs on its own class terrain, and not on that of the bourgeoisie, because the true mobilization of the class can only flow from the development of its consciousness.

2. The "Confrontation with the unions"

One of the justification that the ICC gives for its appeal to join trade union demonstrations is the necessity for the class to confront the unions. What a truly ex-

traordinary argument! The confrontations between the workers and the unions takes place every day, and in a permanent and universal way, in every workplace. At a time of social conflict, the workers confront the unions, especially in the general assemblies and strike committees. Outside of open struggle, this confrontation occurs around all the questions affecting the living and working conditions of the working class, the unemployed included. It seems that for the ICC, the confrontation between workers and unions is of a higher quality in the union-organized demo's. Behind this idea is the vision the ICC has of the working class as being so atomised, so indifferent, a-political and without a dynamic of its own, that it could only profit from a confrontation with the unions in the precise conditions of a union-demo in which the class, freed from its daily torpor, would suddenly discover the nature of the organisations that invite them on those sterile walks!

Another extremely dangerous idea, also put forward by the ICC, presents the unions as being so weak that they are forced to organize these demonstrations under the pressure of the workers struggle, even though they know that they could at any time be overcome by this pressure. And this because the unions capacity to control and divert the workers has been so weakened. With such a vision, the present tactic of the ICC is to call on the mass of workers to deliver the coup de grace to these very unions -already in full decomposition- whose last weapon is to try to prevent the mobilization of the class. But, if it is this view which characterizes the ICC, it is difficult to understand why it calls for the mobilization of a passive and hesitant working class, having no other place to assemble than those provided for it by the bourgeoisie.

The confrontation between the two classes results from the confrontation between their antagonistic interests. The real place of confrontation for the working class is its own class terrain, that is to say, where it can assert its own interests and express its own dynamic. This dynamic, so clearly present in this wave of struggles, is inscribed in the potential that this wave contains. Given that the working class has its own terrain, the tactic of the bourgeoisie absolutely does not consist in merely "occupying the terrain of the working class." Such a view is both static and false. On the contrary, the tactic of the bourgeoisie is an active one : it tries, by a variety of means, to make the proletariat leave its own class terrain, to prevent it from developing its own dynamic because that is the real basis for the development of its class consciousness. To this development of the proletariat's consciousness, the

bourgeoisie does not only oppose tactics of "sabotage", but rather the massive ideological weight which is the most effective obstacle to the clarification of the proletarian perspective.

III CONCLUSION

Corrupted by a process of degeneration, and plunged into disarray and contradiction by a theoretical void and a total incapacity to be up to the demands of the period, the ICC is today developing a practice of intervention which sows confusion in the working class and contradicts the role that it pretends to play: to be an active factor in the development of class consciousness. The appeals to the class to go to trade union demonstrations is only one fact of this degeneration, putting the ICC in the same bag with other political groups which have fallen into neo-union traps.

The ICC today is characterized by a total incomprehension of how the confrontation between the classes take place. This can be seen in the negation that it now makes of the ideological weight exercised by the bourgeoisie, and particularly by its left factions; in its non-recognition of a "class terrain" of the proletariat, where it asserts its own dynamic and perspectives, in its sliding into the false alternatives of the bourgeoisie, in particular that of "passivity or mobilization".

The role of revolutionaries is to be an active factor in the development of class consciousness. Concretely, that means that today revolutionaries must be capable of recognizing the important steps made by the working class in its attempts at self-organization and in extricating itself from the stranglehold of the unions. Through its constant appeals to join trade unions actions, the ICC far from becoming an integral part of this positive movement expressed by the working class is going against this very process.

Beyond a question of principle, it is the very capacity of the ICC to understand this general movement that is at issue. It is necessary to start from the point of view of the working class to see what potential exists and how it can be developed, and not from the point of view of the bourgeoisie by ascertaining whether the workers should go to this demonstration rather than another which might be a more interesting experience of confrontation.

The call to join union demonstrations is seen by the ICC as a recipe in itself. On the one hand, this demonstrates its incapacity to understand the very process in which it is intervening; on the other hand, this shows its incomprehension of its concrete role in this process.

DOCUMENT

THE CONCESSIONS OF THE ICC ON SUBSTITUTIONISM

Under this rubrique we presented in IP I some of the texts we wrote when we were still fighting inside the International Communist Current against the degeneration of that organisation. In this issue we continue this, with a marxist critique of the new ICC-positions on the question of class consciousness, and the role played by councilism (the denial of the function of the revolutionary minority) and substitutionism (its mirror-image: workers must follow professional leaders) against its development.

Let us recapitulate the context of the debate (for a more detailed analysis, read "the decline of the ICC", in IP I). In the aftermath of the wave of struggles that culminated in the mass strike in Poland, a debate developed in the ICC on how the class struggle would further develop and overcome the enormous difficulties that still barred its path. This is the crucial question but not an easy one. Revolutionaries are constantly under pressure to either exaggerate where their class is at, overestimate its strength, make the obstacles magically disappear by portraying the development of CC as an automatic process, or to compensate for the class' weakness by exaggerating their own role or impact. The ICC now defends a blend of both tendencies: on the one hand, it sees the working class as so mature that substitutionism is no longer a significant danger, that the left and the unions have lost all credibility. On the other hand, it sees the working class falling into the trap of rejecting all political organisations, the proletarian ones included, thereby depriving itself from the source of its clarification and sinking into passivity. To this scheme corresponds a concept of intervention to activate the workers and to obtain an immediate influence on the struggle.

These errors and their consequences are criticized in the following article and elsewhere in this issue. But they are not just the product of a failed attempt to deal with the difficulties of this period - they are also the result of the way in which the ICC's central organ chose to deal with internal dissent, at the expense of clarity and real debate.

At an early stage of the debate on how class consciousness would develop after Poland, exaggerations in different directions popped up. While some comrades defended that class consciousness would mature primarily outside the struggle so that a new wave of struggle would re-

emerge at a qualitatively higher level from the onset, others maintained that its maturation only takes place in the open struggle. The ICC's International Secretariat voted a resolution that correctly rejected both conceptions but that introduced at the same time the classical leninist dichotomy between "class consciousness" (identified with the communist program) and "the consciousness of the class" (the degree of assimilation of that program by the class). When a number of comrades objected to that formulation, the IS, almost overnight, decided: -that "centrism" (defined as an attitude of vacillation, a taste for conciliation) was at the source of all the major problems in the ICC, now and in the past;

-that councilism is the main obstacle to the assimilation of class consciousness,

-that all those who didn't agree with those new orientations were centrists towards councilism.

What followed was predictable: not a real debate but the establishment of a relation of power (the rallying of the majority of comrades, with a total disregard for whatever confusions they may defend, around the IS and the isolation of the dissenters, by a variety of tactics described in the above mentioned article) that culminated at its last congress, where those comrades who refused to pledge to remain in the organisation regardless of what decisions the congress would make or how the debate would be conducted, were forced to leave. The text that follows was written by a minority-comrade who was not a member of the tendency but who refused to take the loyalty-oath and joined the fraction. The parts omitted from his original text deal with the questions of centrism and intervention, which are treated elsewhere in this issue and in IP I. The part printed here, not only critiques the ICC's regressions on the question of class consciousness but also analyzes how its real development takes place, how substitutionism and anti-partyism fit into the whole of capitalism's ideological attack on this development.

In this, it is firmly based on the ICC's own pamphlet on this question which is implicitly rejected by the ICC's new orientations. We have omitted all names and references to internal ICC-texts from the original article.

* * * * *

At the eve of the first revolutionary wave, conditions for the homogenisation of class consciousness were marked, amongst others, by:

- a strong tradition of self-organisation in the proletariat, developed in the struggles during ascendancy. The integration of social democracy into the bourgeois states could not prevent this factor from having a great impact on the constitution of revolutionary parties and the formation of unitary organs in the struggle;
- the fact that the bourgeoisie was surprised by the revolution, that it had underestimated the proletarian danger, that it was internally divided and that its ideological buffers and mystificatory tools were comparatively poorly developed.

Today, the revolutionary organs of the proletariat are tiny and dispersed while the omnipresence of bourgeois ideology and the sophistication of its mystificatory tools have been developed to a degree unimaginable in Lenin's time.

How can the feeble revolutionary forces of today fulfill their task? How can the class as a whole produce massively enough the consciousness needed for revolution? Clearly, "the theory and practice of the Bolsheviks" are not sufficient to understand the process, despite majoritarians' assertions to the contrary. We may have some notion of it (precisely because we know more today than the Bolsheviks did) but there is a lot that we don't know and don't really discuss. In the past we could afford this 'vacuum', because in the period coming out of the counter-revolution the emphasis necessarily was on the reappropriation of the lessons of the past.

But now, with the acceleration of history since the massive strikes in Poland, every time the struggle heats up we are confronted with this deficiency. Now, this lack of development and the 'centrism'-barrier against this development tend to invite bourgeois concepts to creep up in this 'vacuum' because it cannot really be a vacuum. Just like the proletariat as a whole, to engage in revolutionary activity we need to see the revolution not only as necessary but also as possible, so we cannot act without a (conscious or unconscious) concept of how it will occur. For the proletariat as a whole the necessity of the struggle follows quite directly from the attack on its living and working conditions, but the possibility of the struggle requires a consciousness of its own force, its own nature. To the degree that this consciousness is lacking, its struggle will be contained and rendered impotent by bourgeois ideology. In the same way, for revolutionaries the understanding of the necessity of revolution follows already directly from Marx's analysis of capitalism, but the understanding of its possibility requires a profound grasp of how class consciousness develops in present-day conditions. To the degree

that this consciousness is lacking, their intervention will be undermined by bourgeois ideology.

The downgrading of the difficulties of the revolutionary process in order to see it as possible, is the main gate through which bourgeois ideology floods in:

- by downgrading the development of class consciousness to an automatic process, to which every worker is subjected by virtue of his place in the production process. This bourgeois vulgar materialist view which tends to portray every worker as militant and every struggle as heroic, 'liberates' revolutionaries from the necessity to criticise the workers, so they can 'participate' and exalt the struggle: *ouvrierism*. As, in this view, workers become conscious because of their place in the production process and not through their growing unity, there is no need to combat their *localism* and other forms of accepting divisions imposed on them;
- by downgrading the power and organisation (and machiavellianism) of the bourgeoisie, the weight of its totalitarian state on the consciousness of the workers. Just like the economic crisis seen as automatically producing class consciousness in the proletariat, it is seen as automatically throwing the bourgeoisie in disarray, prey to its own contradictions. As in the first case, this view tends to greatly underestimate the ideological weight of the totalitarian state on the workers;
- by downgrading the indispensability of the open, massive struggle for the development of class consciousness and minimising the destruction of consciousness that takes place outside the open struggle by the pressure of bourgeois ideology on isolated workers;
- by exaggerating the weight of the revolutionary minority, portraying it as strengthening when it is in crisis, exalting its 'decisive impact' when the moments in which it can have such an impact are still rare (which implies either an *ouvrieristic* overestimation of the workers and/or a toning down of the most unpopular revolutionary positions);
- by diminishing the extent and depth of class consciousness needed to make the revolution possible;
- by balancing a lack of consciousness in the class as a whole with a compensating role for the revolutionary party which is seen as the director of the revolutionary struggle telling the class when to proceed and when to retreat in orderly fashion, and in which the class must have confidence.

We usually classify the first three of these errors under 'councilism' and the latter ones under 'substitutionism', because the former lead to denying the indispensability of the

party while the latter can lead to sabotaging the self-organisation of the class. But it is not that simple. In fact, ouvrierism and localism often go hand in hand with substitutionism in the same groups (cf the intervention of the CWO, PCI ...). In the reality of the struggle, they manifest themselves side by side, symbiotic and compensating each other, as vital components of the bourgeoisie's ideological arsenal. Every time the workers' struggle heats up, the traits described above become clearly visible in the class and the revolutionary milieu, the ICC included. In every major intervention we have seen this tendency towards ouvrierism, a critical exaltation of militancy, great reluctance to attack the bourgeois ideology that is alive within the first attempts of workers' self-organisation, sometimes even a complete abandonment of our political role. We have seen this during the dockers' strike in Rotterdam, the steel strikes in France and Britain, in some of our analyses on Poland, during the recent miners' strike in Britain (cf articles in *World Revolution* on the end of the strike).

But neither is there a scarcity of examples of the second type of simplification, those going in a substitutionist direction, especially since the reflux of the struggle in Poland. Since then, and despite our often affirmed position that the party is not the 'general staff' of the class, the ICC has more and more described the class as an army and itself as a strategist, a "general" as *World Revolution* wrote 'ironically', calling its weaker battalions into a tactical but "orderly retreat", after which the development of class consciousness continues and even intensifies ("class consciousness above all develops outside the struggle", the ICC majority asserts) through the magic of subterranean maturation - a concept which is correct per se but which the ICC uses more and more to deny the destruction of consciousness outside the open struggle (against the positions affirmed in its pamphlet on class consciousness, see p35) and downgrade the indispensability of the open struggle for the development of consciousness to the point of seeing, as *World Revolution* did at one point, non-striking miners at the vanguard of this development (a view so gross that it was quickly retracted - without, however, going to the roots of the mistake). And of course, the extension of the open struggle to the main proletarian heartlands was no longer seen as necessary for class consciousness to come to fruition, as the 'weak-link critique' declared that such a maturation was possible within Western Europe alone.

Downgrading the importance of the open struggle in the development of class consciousness means downgrading the extent and depth of class consciousness that is necessary to make the revolution possible, and therefore also inevitably means seeking a compensating and thus substitutionist role for the revolutionary minority or party. Formally, it's still the class as a whole and not

the party that leads and organises the revolution (though this is seldom mentioned anymore in ICC references to the party) but the proletariat's "sense of decision culminates in the confidence" it has in the party (*International Review* 40, p16). Those who think this is quoted out of context might reread the context - the attributing of the defeat in Germany not to the weight of (bourgeois) social-democracy and the caving in by revolutionaries to social-democracy, but to "the councilist tendencies within the German proletariat" (without whose 'lack of confidence' there never would have been a KAPD, a revolutionary party aimed at stimulating the self-organisation of the workers).

Already before the current debates we experienced great difficulties in recognising errors in intervention and overcoming them. But the current 'theoretical' framework of 'councilism as the greatest danger' and substitutionism as a danger of the past or the faraway future precludes this and thus opens the door to more and more serious mistakes. The simultaneous appearance of elements of both councilism and substitutionism (sometimes in the same formulation as when an ICC leaflet was signed "workers of Paris") cannot be understood with the councilism-the-greatest-danger theory because it is a theory based on symptoms and on the denial of those symptoms that don't fit the theory. But, as the majority is so fond of saying, we must not attack the symptoms but the roots. In this case, we can only fight councilism and substitutionism if we can see their common roots in the bourgeois concepts of organisation on the form of the struggle, that creep into the vacuum in our understanding of the development of class consciousness.

A_REGRESSION

In the name of anti-centrism, the need for debate to develop our understanding of the process of class consciousness has been rejected, but it has been 'developed' anyway. While pretending to do no more than clarify what we defended all along, the majority has put forward a concept of class consciousness quite different to what the ICC used to say on this subject and which provides a soil in which the bourgeois roots of councilism and substitutionism can take hold.

The concept that emerges from majoritarian texts, if not always coherently, is that the communist organisation(s)/party has a complete vision or consciousness ("the affirmation that revolutionaries have a partial vision is false and dangerous"), since "class consciousness should be understood as the crystallisation at a theoretical and political level of the major lessons of the class struggle" and is therefore embodied by the party. From this follows the "rejection of the idea that it's in and through the struggle that class consciousness develops"; since its development is the work of revolutionaries possessing a complete vision, it is "above all outside moments of struggle" that

class consciousness develops. Therefore, the problem the class is facing today, is no longer how can class consciousness be developed or homogenised (the term homogenisation implies extension and deepening) but how can this finished (if still 'enrichable') product be assimilated by the class. Hence the necessity of a new concept, "consciousness of the class" that measures "the degree of assimilation at any given moment". By reducing the problem to a simple assimilation process, the main obstacle is also reduced to distrust of political organisations ("councilism the main danger") and its progress can be measured by the proletariat's "confidence in the party" (according to International Review 40). While this concept has some councilist flavour (in particular the automatism with which the proletariat comes to consciousness once it overcomes its 'distrust for politics') it is also a reasoning to which any bordigist could subscribe. No wonder that we hear today that "we're closer to the bordigists on the question of the party" or that there's a fear that we will be mistaken for them, as can be seen in the statement that the main danger of bordigism today is that it discredits "the very idea of a revolutionary party" (International Review 40) and thereby reinforces councilism.

What is this "very idea of a revolutionary party"? The one the class needs is of a party which is diametrically opposed to the bordigist concept, it is a party which does not exist to lead the class but to stimulate it to count only on itself and to wipe out all divisions in its own ranks. The bordigist conception of the party is a caricature of the bourgeois conception of the party. If we still defend the same proletarian party-concept, it will only benefit from a discrediting of the bordigist party-concept. To say it benefits councilism is staying at the level of symptoms and not going to the roots, since councilism is based on the same party-concept as bordigism's, a party-concept that comes from the bourgeoisie.

But today, the ICC's positions on class consciousness and the party are in evolution, and this evolution may have reached a pre-bordigist stage. Our pamphlet on class consciousness had nothing but harsh words for claims of revolutionaries to a complete vision, for those who give themselves the role of "bringing consciousness to the workers" (see pp 67-68). While clearly affirming that the communist programme is the clearest condensation and expression of class consciousness, the ICC of the pamphlet argued strongly against the idea that class consciousness should be understood as the programme, embodied by the party, developing above all outside the struggle. Instead it defended the position that "class consciousness exists on the basis of the practical unity of the class" (p32); that it is "the consciousness of the proletariat of itself as a class ... the affirmation of the proletariat of its nature as a revolutionary class, as conscious being" (p36); that therefore its development

"is always synonymous with the class struggle" (p36); and that "to give the party the power to embody class consciousness is to prevent the full flowering of class consciousness" (p72). Revolutionaries, according to the pamphlet, "live as part of the proletariat's consciousness and serve to homogenise it" (p84). Therefore, their relationship to the whole of the class cannot be characterised in terms of obedience or confidence but, on the contrary, in terms of critical interaction. The majoritarians' insistence on a party/class relationship based on confidence (from which follows its theory of 'councilism as the greatest danger'), especially "on the point of culmination" of the revolutionary wave "when the proletariat needs to act rapidly and with the greatest possible decision", implies - whether they are conscious of it or not - a concept of the party directing the class struggle, giving the class instructions on when or where to go forward or retreat. But if, as the ICC used to argue, the role of the party is not to direct the class or lead a seizure of power but to homogenise class consciousness; if class consciousness exists on the basis of the practical unity of the class; if it is the state of the class as a conscious being organised in its own unitary organs: then it does not need these instructions. If the class waits for them it is a sign that class consciousness has not matured, that the only guarantee for the revolution (the collective strength and consciousness of the class) is not yet there, that the revolutionary wave has not yet culminated.

So the reduction of the problem to an assimilation process and a question of confidence in the party resulted from a serious regression in our understanding of the process of class consciousness, a penetration of bourgeois ideas on the question of the party.

THE COMMON CONTEXT

When comrades talk about 'the danger of councilism', we can assume they do not in the first place refer to the few ephemeral political groups that exist under that label. They refer in the first place to the danger of an idée, a concept that exists in the class as a whole. The ICC majority also argues primarily about a 'councilist attitude in the class' (that supposedly existed during the German revolution and is again the greatest danger today). But what is this councilist idea that is so much alive in the class? Unfortunately, it is not over-confidence in the spontaneous self-organisation of the class, or over-estimation of the role of the councils. That kind of self-confidence is still painfully lacking, so there's hardly any danger of overconfidence. So the idea we are really talking about is the concept of the organisation, of the struggle in general and the party in particular. How must the struggle be organised? What is the role of the most advanced elements, the spokesmen, the politically clearest, the organised minority, the political party? In the current stage of

development of the struggle, the vast majority of our class is still trapped in a bourgeois concept of organisation and sees only the bourgeois model of a party, while at the same time in its struggle it is viscerally reacting against it. But it has not yet clearly grasped the alternative, it has not yet reappropriated the proletarian concept. What we see today can only be understood as a moment in a process. The tendency to reject the bourgeois concept on organisation is developing but is far from matured. Naturally this is expressed in growing suspicion of all parties and unions without yet embracing in a conscious manner the self-organisation of the struggle against the union model (despite the growing occurrence of workers' assemblies, mass pickets, etc) and without yet seeing the proletarian concept of the party as diametrically opposed to the bourgeois one. So it's not councilism as such that is the problem, but the fact that the bourgeois concept of organisation is not yet consciously rejected, that (while it's being put into question) it's still present in the minds of the workers. But the new ICC position on councilism as the greatest danger sees the symptom (suspicion of all political parties) in itself, isolated from the process, while the reason that it's there so clearly, is precisely the fact that the ideological foundation of councilism (i.e. the bourgeois concept of organisation) is under attack in the minds of the workers.

So, if when talking about councilism we realise that the danger is the bourgeois organisation concept, that 'councilism' is reflecting the fact that it's not yet overcome, that there is as yet no clear alternative, we must assess substitutionism in the same way. The danger is not the few bordigist groups that openly defend a substitutionist coherence, but the existence of the bourgeois organisation concept expressed by substitutionism in the class at large. For, if the class has a 'councilist' attitude (which, as has been shown, is a totally wrong formulation); if it tends to reject the bourgeois concept of organisation but not yet consciously; if it reacts to the forms but not the content, to the symptoms but not the roots: then the danger is still there and only needs new disguises to continue to destroy or prevent workers' self-organisation with substitutionist ideology. The danger of substitutionism will only recede when the soil becomes less fertile for anti-partyism too. Those who, like the ICC majority, see the anti-partyism of councilism and substitutionism as mutually exclusive antagonisms which occur in different periods and different geographical zones, who see one become stronger when the other weakens and vice versa, really deform the history of these currents and fall into a crude mechanistic materialism that is rather typical for councilism, and furthermore remain blind to the fact:

- that the superficial contradiction between substitutionism and anti-partyism conceals a common foundation;

- that their relation is only contradictory in appearance while in fact they are symbiotic, feeding on each other, reinforcing each other and compensating each other;
- that they can compensate rather than annihilate each other because of this common foundation that makes them defend different aspects of the same ideology against class consciousness.

For revolutionaries it is impossible to fight one without fighting the other because a marxist attack on these positions does not mean sloganising about the necessity of the party against councilists and about the role of the councils against bordigists but to defend a coherent proletarian concept on the organisation question that corresponds to the dynamic and needs of the struggle and goes therefore against all aspects of the bourgeois ideology on this question. We must concretise this, but before we do we must clarify our terms.

WHAT_IS_SUBSTITUTIONISM?

This is necessary because the ICC majority uses an anti-marxist trick to avoid the discussion. While they agree that the anti-partyism of councilism is a bourgeois position, a mystification against the working class whether it is defended by confused proletarian groups like councilists or bourgeois groups like the anarchists, they refuse to recognise that this is true also for anti-partyism's symmetrical image, substitutionism. Substitutionism, we are told, does not come from the bourgeoisie but from social democracy with its 'educator' concept, and it is not a mystification defended by the left, because "the left cannot 'substitute' itself for the class, it can only mystify and massacre it." And so: Abracadabra! - as the majority likes to exclaim. The substitutionist mystifications of the left have disappeared into a nameless nothing and what remains after the majority's shabby trick are a few sclerotic bordigist groups whose substitutionism presumably has no relation to bourgeois mystifications and who hardly can be seen as a major obstacle to the development of class consciousness. But tell us, majoritarians, how can 'revolutionaries' substitute themselves for the class without mystifying the class and contributing to its massacre? How come, when the same position is defended by bordigists and by leftists, in the first case it is substitutionism and in the second case it is not? Isn't that the worst kind of anti-marxist subjectivism of which we have given other examples in the previous parts of this text? Why not say that revolutionary syndicalism and revolutionary parliamentarism are not defended by the left since the leftists' real intentions are not revolutionary, and that therefore these positions are of no great danger for the proletariat?

The truth of the matter is that the roots of substitutionism are not in "the heritage of the social democratic conception of the par-

ty" as International Review 40 states (p15), but in the ideological heritage of bourgeois revolutions" as the ICC pamphlet on class consciousness says (p51). The pamphlet is very clear on the fact that the origins of substitutionism are not simply in social democracy itself and the conditions of the ascendant period, but in the bourgeois influence on social democracy, resulting from the illusion that socialism could be realised within the framework of the capitalist system and therefore with the organisational concepts of that system. It is very clear on the fact that the party concept of bordigists and other 'leninists' comes from the bourgeoisie. If they 'differ from leftist 'leninists', it is not because but despite their position on organisation. And to assess the danger of that position it doesn't really matter whether the subjective goals of leftists and bordigists are different or not. Marxists do not judge positions according to the intentions of those who defend them, but according to their class nature. Substitutionism, the seeking of control over the class, is a bourgeois position that goes diametrically against the essence and means of the workers' struggle, whether it is practised 'for the revolution' or not. Because the proletariat, as an exploited class, has no power whatsoever, except as a conscious collectivity that cannot tolerate any internal division or conflict of interests and thus no hierarchy, in the struggle for its class interests. We have no reason at all to hide the fact that bordigists and leftists are on the same line on this question. Quite the contrary. What we fight in other proletarian groups are positions which they share with the bourgeoisie and through which, in the period of decadence in which the bourgeoisie recuperates everything, they are already used by the bourgeoisie. The fact that they haven't yet totally moved to the bourgeois camp doesn't change this. Without a brutal reversal, they will eventually. The only way to prevent it is an uncompromising struggle against these positions and the minimal requirement for that is that the link between their politics and those of the bourgeoisie is clearly shown. What the article in International Review 40 and other 'contributions' of the majority do is exactly the opposite: the link is smuggled away or even denied. This way the majority makes itself powerless to fight substitutionism. Every real struggle against substitutionism must start from its social-economic origins - it must be situated as the position of an exploiting class, as for instance the resolution on organisation printed in Revolution Internationale 17 does - and must clearly show the consequences: that there is not a gap but a continuity between the substitutionist positions defended by proletarian groups and the mystifications with which the bourgeois left prevent and destroy self-organisation today; that the practical application of these substitutionist positions means sabotage of the struggle and ultimately state terror.

Is substitutionism bourgeois ideology or a

'proletarian error'? After the article in International Review 40 ("leftists do not commit the errors of substitutionism", p14) members of the majority were not quite sure. In the US section, one defended the first, another the second. They finally settled around the formulation that substitutionism is "a bourgeois position that exists only in the proletariat". Oh, comrades, can you hear Marx moan in his grave? A bourgeois position that does not exist in the bourgeoisie but only in the proletariat! Next thing we'll hear about proletarian positions that exist only in the bourgeoisie! What kind of marxism have you concocted? It is ironic, but not coincidental, that the majority 'proves' the 'lesser danger' of substitutionism with a purely councilist argument. The workers have overcome that danger already by themselves, without needing the intervention of revolutionaries, so we're told: "The proletariat, on the strength of its historical experience, will in the future no longer have a blind and naive confidence in the organisations which claim to be part of it." (International Review 40, p15) Isn't that nice. If there is no danger that the proletariat will naively trust the organisations which claim to be part of it (which are not only the bordigists but also the left and the unions) then isn't the revolution inevitable? Then what do we need a party for? Either the majoritarians mean there is no danger that the proletariat in the future will trust the left (and if they do, they only confirm that their understanding of class consciousness is becoming a cocktail of councilist and substitutionist deviations) or they mean: yes, there is a danger that the workers will trust the left but there is no danger that they will trust proletarian groups that seek the same leadership over the class as the left does. Why the historical experience of the workers would automatically remove the conditions for trust in the left remains a mystery. I leave it to the majoritarians to say which of these interpretations is the correct one. But it's clear that both are hiding what substitutionism means in the practice of the bourgeoisie against the workers' struggle, in the destruction of self-organisation: Take your heads out of the sand comrades, and realise the falseness of your removal of substitutionism out of its bourgeois ideological context. Ask yourselves why you seek to prove that substitutionism, which supposedly has nothing to do with the practice of the bourgeois left, is a lesser danger because of the workers' experience with the bourgeois left (stalinist counter-revolution)!

HOW ANTI-PARTYISM AND SUBSTITUTIONISM FIT INTO BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

What is the most crucial, decisive element in the development of class consciousness? According to the ICC pamphlet on class consciousness, "Its (the proletariat's) capacity for self-organisation is the measure of its passage from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself, from a simple economic category within capitalist production into a histor-

ical class." (p37) For the majoritarians, who believe that its historical experience has made the class immune to the danger of substitutionism (except in moments of decline in the revolutionary period!), this can mean only one of two things:

- either the crucial step is already taken, the proletariat has already developed its capacity for self-organisation and has become a class for itself, a position which would be quite hard to defend;
- or there is no relationship between overcoming the danger of substitutionism and the development of self-organisation.

But if substitutionism is not a barrier to self-organisation, what is? In the period of decadence, substitutionism is the main ideological justification of the daily sabotage of self-organisation and collective class activity by the unions and the left. Daily they need this ideology; the belief in the indispensability of experts in leadership, of hierarchical control over the 'stupid' workers who by themselves would only be capable of chaotic and confused actions. Of course the unions and the left are in the first place organs of the state, part of the ruling class, but they need an ideology to justify their position, otherwise they wouldn't be able to withstand the power of the workers. In the practice of the unions and the left, substitutionist ideology and military control over the workers are inseparably linked. The one is indispensable to justify the other. The cult of leadership and specialists is just as essential for the union ideology as sectoral division. If the workers had already overcome substitutionism, the unions wouldn't be able to recruit some of the most combative among them as shop stewards and other 'organisers'. Even for the most basic maintenance of order, the idea that there is an enlightened minority which knows better than the others when the workers are permitted to refuse to take it on the chins, is indispensable.

Bordigists and others within the revolutionary camp who defend that ideology, suffer from the illusion that the essence of the capitalist superstructure, the division between leaders and followers, thought and action, doesn't need to be destroyed in the minds of the workers but can simply be taken over or modified. Leftists have only completed that line of reasoning. So it's no wonder bordigists are close to leftists and sometimes are hard to separate from them. The ICC majority pretends that substitutionism is something of revolutionary groups while the destruction of self-organisation is the work of the left and the unions, or, that substitutionism has no practical consequences. But just like the action of leftists, the substitutionism of bordigists leads to the destruction of the workers' struggle from within and the defence of the capitalist order. Their methods - factory groups and unemployed committees as 'transmission belts', participation in goon-squads like the PCI at Sonacotra, entrism in bourgeois institutions like the

unions, forms of frontism, etc - are all fed by their substitutionism which allows them to succumb more openly than councilists to union ideology and tactics. And more directly also, because their intervention is organised while the direct result of councilism provisionally is mostly demoralisation and disbandment in the revolutionary milieu. Their small number doesn't negate their danger. Like small leftist groups they contribute through their radicalism (and even more because of what remains of their proletarian nature), to the credibility of the bourgeois mystifications and control apparatus.

The maturation of class consciousness is a concrete and practical process that occurs in the first place through the tendency towards increasing extension and self-organisation of the struggle. They go hand in hand and so do the weapons of the bourgeoisie to prevent them. To do so, the bourgeoisie not only uses its own organs but also exploits its influence within proletarian organisations, in both its substitutionist and councilist expressions. Because of its localism, its ouvrierism, its anti-centralisation ideology, councilism is particularly useful to undermine the understanding of the necessity of extension, especially among those workers who already grasp the necessity of self-organisation. But so is the substitutionist ideology because it creates the conditions for false extension, for an extension based on receiving orders rather than active participation and collective decision by all the workers, and which therefore weakens the development of class consciousness.

The substitutionist ideology is the first weapon against self-organisation. As long as it survives in the minds of the workers, left parties may lose control, union leaders may have to flee, but there is still an iron barrier to prevent the flowering of class consciousness. The decisive shift in the balance of forces between the classes will not take place as long as the masses of workers believe they have to follow leaders and take orders, regardless whether these leaders are leftists or good-intentioned 'revolutionaries'; as long as the most militant and conscious workers think they must become leaders. But councilism undermines the tendency towards self-organisation too, by isolating workers and especially the most conscious ones, by saying to them that there is no alternative to the bourgeois party, by denying this essential form of self-organisation that regroups the politically clearest and allows them to intervene; by leading to demoralisation and democratism.

Substitutionism and anti-partyism are intertwined, in the ideological offensive of the bourgeoisie, in the pitfalls of the struggle, in the confusions of the workers and even of revolutionaries. In every important struggle this can be seen. The dockers' strike in Rotterdam in 1979 is a good example:

- The striking workers didn't understand the necessity to extend the strike beyond the port because of the influence of localism and corporatism. They were suspicious of the unions, took steps to organise themselves (particularly for the extension within the port) but did not overcome the substitutionist ideology, which made them vulnerable for manipulation by the self-styled leaders of the strike committee, and even by leftists.

- The strike committee expressed and reinforced the same corporatism. Its members fought each other for the positions of leadership and control. Like the unions used to, they held 'general assemblies' in which they alone spoke and the workers listened. Those amongst its members who were the clearest in denouncing the unions and the left were the worst divulgiers of corporatist and ouvrierist mystifications.

- The intervention of the ICC was itself a clear example of ouvrierism and concessions to substitutionism. It consisted mainly in the attempt to form 'solidarity committees' to distribute the leaflets (and confusions) of the strike committee and to collect money. It refused to criticise the substitutionist manipulations of the strike committee in its

leaflets. Its discussions were directed to members of the strike committee rather than combative elements outside of it. Afterwards the ICC organised a debate, not in its own name but hiding behind a 'committee of workers' groups' or something in that style (indeed, the recent initiative to give out a leaflet in the name of "workers of Paris" was not exactly a new mistake).

The point here is to show that you cannot separate anti-partyism, ouvrierism and substitutionism from each other and from their bourgeois ideological context without falling yourself into its traps. As the left in opposition and other ploys wear out, their combined use will increase, not decrease - not only in union manoeuvres etc, but also in organs of the class itself (strike committees, political groups, etc) in which the influence of bourgeois ideology will continue to assert itself. Only the clearest understanding of what the development of class consciousness really means will allow revolutionaries to combat this.

Sander

PUBLIC MEETING

*INTERNATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE has held public meetings in New York, London and Brussels, as an integral part of its determination to actively stimulate a real debate and discussion around the vital issues that face revolutionaries and the working class. A report on these public meetings will appear in IP/3. Readers interested in the date, time and place of our next series of Public Lectures should write to our P.O.Boxes.

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APPEAL TO READERS

We intend to make this magazine an instrument of political clarification and understanding of the situation today. We also need to have the tools necessary for direct intervention in the class struggle (leaflets, posters, newspapers). Our limited material resources and our small number makes this task very difficult. We appeal to our readers to help circulate Internationalist Perspective and to carry on political discussion with us. We ask you to subscribe to our magazine and to show a practical support for our efforts by giving a contribution if you can.



OUR POSITIONS

The external Fraction of the International Communist Current claims a continuity with the programmatic framework developed by the ICC before its degeneration. This programmatic framework is itself based on the successive historical contribution of the Communist League, of the I, II and III Internationals and of the Left Fractions which detached themselves from the latter, in particular the German, Dutch and Italian Left Communists. After being de facto excluded from the ICC following the struggle that it waged against the political and organizational degeneration of that Current, the Fraction now continues its work of developing revolutionary consciousness outside the organizational framework of the ICC.

The Fraction defends the following basic principles, fundamental lessons of the class struggle :

Since World War I, capitalism has been a decadent social system which has nothing to offer the working class and humanity as a whole except cycles of crises, war and reconstruction. Its irreversible historical decay poses a single choice for humanity : either socialism or barbarism.

The working class is the only class able to carry out the communist revolution against capitalism.

The revolutionary struggle of the proletariat must lead to a general confrontation with the capitalist state. Its class violence is carried out in the mass action of revolutionary transformation. The practice of terror and terrorism, which expresses the blind violence of the state and of the desperate petty-bourgeoisie respectively, is alien to the proletariat.

In destroying the capitalist state, the working class must establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale, as a transition to communist society. The form that this dictatorship will take is the international power of the Workers' Councils.

Communism or socialism means neither "self-management" nor "nationalization". It requires the conscious abolition by the proletariat of capitalist social relations and institutions such as wage-labor, commodity production, national frontiers, class divisions and the state apparatus, and is based on a unified world human community.

The so-called "socialist countries" (Russia, the Eastern bloc, China, Cuba, etc.) are a particular expression of the universal tendency to state capitalism, itself an expression of the decay of capitalism. There are no "socialist countries"; these are just so many capitalist bastions that the proletariat must destroy like any other capitalist state.

In this epoch, the trade unions everywhere are organs of capitalist discipline within the proletariat. Any policy based on working in the unions, whether to preserve or "transform" them, only serves to

subject the working class to the capitalist state and to divert it from its own necessary self-organization.

In decadent capitalism, parliaments and elections are nothing but sources of bourgeois mystification. Any participation in the electoral circus can only strengthen this mystification in the eyes of the workers.

The so-called "workers" parties, "Socialist" and "Communist", as well as their extreme left appendages, are the left face of the political apparatus of capital.

Today all factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. Any tactics calling for "Popular Fronts", "Anti-Fascist Fronts" or "United Fronts" between the proletariat and any faction of the bourgeoisie can only serve to derail the struggle of the proletariat and disarm it in the face of the class enemy.

So-called "national liberation struggles" are moments in the deadly struggle between imperialist powers large and small to gain control over the world market. The slogan of "support for people in struggle" amounts, in fact, to defending one imperialist power against another under nationalist or "socialist" verbiage.

The victory of the revolution requires the organization of revolutionaries into a party. The role of a party is neither to "organize the working class" nor to "take power in the name of the workers", but through its active intervention to develop the class consciousness of the proletariat.

ACTIVITY OF THE FRACTION

In the present period characterized by a general rise in the class struggle and at the same time by a weakness on the part of revolutionary organizations and the degeneration of the pole of regroupment represented by the ICC, the Fraction has as its task to conscientiously take on the two functions which are basic to revolutionary organizations:

1) The development of revolutionary theory on the basis of the historic acquisitions and experiences of the proletariat, so as to transcend the contradictions of the Communist Lefts and of the present revolutionary milieu, in particular on the questions of class consciousness, the role of the party and the conditions imposed by state capitalism.

2) Intervention in the class struggle on an international scale, so as to be a catalyst in the process which develops in workers' struggles towards consciousness, organization and the generalized revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The capacity to form a real class party in the future depends on the accomplishment of these tasks by the present revolutionary forces. This requires, on their part, the will to undertake a real clarification and open confrontation of communist positions by rejecting all monolithism and sectarianism.